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THE AMERICAN MUSIC INDEX



JUNE, 1949 VOL. XV, NO. 10

edited by PETER HUGH REED

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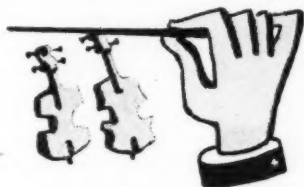
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# The American RECORD GUIDE

June, 1949 ▲ Vol. XV No. 10

formerly THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



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## Problems of the Record Buyer

### Editorial Notes

THE PREDICAMENT of record buyers these days is continually advanced in letters to the editor. Some correspondents are uncertain what changes to make in their equipment in order to accommodate the new records. Some are not interested in making concessions to three speeds.

"Gear shifts," writes a Washington, D.C. reader, "belong on automobiles, not on phonographs. If I made concessions to three speeds I would be constantly wondering which was *high* and which was *low* speed, speaking in terms of my automobile. Is the 78 the real top speed in quality or is the 33 to be regarded as such, or again the 45? This difference in ratio is completely confusing, and the idea of three speeds remains irksome. As music is my prime reason for owning a phonograph, I feel that I can still stay with 78s. But the real boon to the recorded music collector has been the 33, which permits one to sit back and listen to over 20 minutes of music undisturbed by a changer's slow operation. Maybe some smart fellow can invent a Dyna-Flow or Fluid Drive mechanism that will operate by itself when you put a 33, a 45, or a 78 on the turntable, or am I having a dream in the twilight?"

Having enjoyed record music for a quarter of a century with one recognized speed, it is understandable why confusion exists in the minds of present-day record buyers. We are constantly asked, how do we know a fourth speed may not show up tomorrow? Investments in equipment, which has functioned for some time in a satisfactory manner, must be considered by many these days. With the cost of living going up, people are reluctant to make purchases of things they feel they can do without. Some were willing to add a player for the 33s (a great many did)

but two players present an added problem. Though manufacturers have built three-way players, as well as equipment, it cannot be said that the reproduction of the new discs is served to best advantage. This is especially true of Victor's 45.

Let us consider the predicaments of two Chicago readers, outlined in the letter of one who wishes to remain anonymous. What he has to say represents the opining comments of the majority who have written us. Here's his letter.

"You may be interested in the comments of a friend. He and I have been mutually interested in recorded music for many years though his experience does not date back so far as my own, which is now of about 40 years standing.

#### Dubious Values

"Recently, he said: 'I have about decided to chuck the whole business of records in the home. As you know I have about \$2,000 invested in my equipment, but they tell me it is just a commercial machine, incapable of playing any of the modern records properly without many changes. The pickup is too heavy, though it is one of the most expensive magnetics of its time. The costly motor operates at only one speed and cannot be altered. My speakers are obsolete, though by no means is my system of a limited range. I am told I must junk the whole thing and start all over, that I must get a lot of mechanical gadgets into my parlor that will look like a corner of a garage, or, if I do not fancy that, I must have a built-to-order cabinet in which to hide it all. After making this huge investment I am to enjoy it until something else comes along which is better.

"In the past you and I bought a lot of fine music on records in performances which we were assured by many would have pleased the composer. Today, countless new recordings imply that what we bought is not tops. The best are the latest recordings. Yesterday's interpreters are not as good as today's. Yesterdays' engineers did not know what they were doing.

"I used to think that I had something in my machine and my record library. The pleasure it gave me was, as you know, one of my biggest ones. I often found it much greater enjoyment to play over several sets of records than to gad off downtown to a concert hall or the opera. You did not have

to sit and gaze at a lot of pot-bellied or lantern-jawed fiddlers and tooters, with a prima donna conductor taking the spotlight, and on all sides of you a lot of people coughing, sneezing, yawning, turning their programs insideout, scuffling their feet, and in the intermission explaining that wonderful bridge hand they almost did not have, or what a bargain in lip-stick and costume jewelry they picked up that morning, or that the cook had given notice and what in heaven's name could they do.

"But now it would seem that recorded music, as I once knew it and enjoyed it so greatly, was all a delusion. That what I took for some of the most beautiful music in the world was just a job lot of infrequencies and was now the object of pity from the experts and the music lovers who place the value of reproduction above that of the music. There is something wrong with everything, from soup to nuts. So, I say, reluctantly, what's the use! I'm wasting my time, likewise a lot of money, and am just a snide if I do not realize it. I'm thinking of selling my machine and my record library, but if I ever do I do not want to be around when it's all carted out. And I do not want to think of the losses I'll incur, so do not ask me what I got for everything, if I do sell."

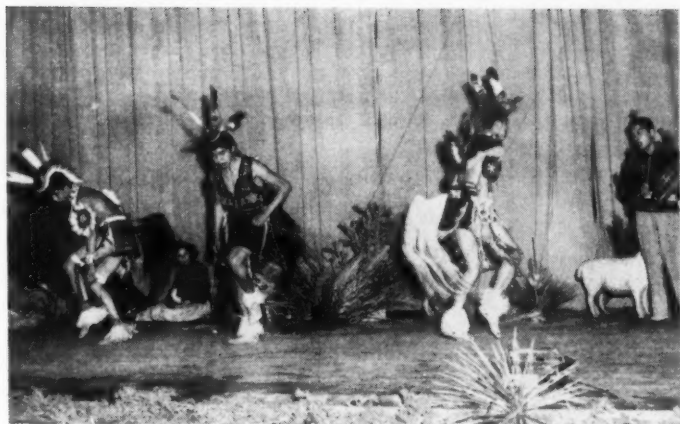
My correspondent continues: "This seems to be the effect that contemporary 'expertising' in frequencies, alterations in speed, equipment and recordings has produced in my friend — a once very ardent 'fan.' It is not improbable that there are others.

#### Further Problems

"For myself, I am having my troubles. I have a new, high-class and expensive machine (commercial, of course) of great power and resonance in reproduction. It is fitted with the newest and supposedly most perfect-playing needle on the market (guaranteed for several thousand plays). But, I cannot play a lot of my best record sets on this new equipment with its *perfect* needle, as the surface noise (hitherto unnoticeable) is so obtrusive that the musical pleasure of a sensitive listener remains unendurable. Too, I begin to notice record wear on a lot of fine sets which never before showed wear. So many records played finely upon my previous machine, with various kinds of adjustable

(Continued on page 296)





Taos Horse  
Tail Dance  
(Photo C.  
E. Redman)

## SOME AMERICAN INDIAN MUSIC ON RECORDS

by Henry Shultz

### PART II



Zuni Indian Rain  
Dancer  
(Courtesy of Manuel Archuleta)

THERE IS NOT a great deal of Indian music presently available on records under commercial label, and some of the most precious of these records have been allowed by the major companies to go out of print. In assembling as many of these as I could locate for discussion here, I have been unable to find through any sources available to me an album issued in October or November of 1947 by Disc (now withdrawn in favor of another to be discussed at the end of this article). It is called *American Indian Songs and Dances* and was recorded "on location" by Charles Hofmann. It consists of six 10-inch records (Set 161, price complete with album \$8.50). I have, however, heard all of these Disc records, which by the way, are not confined entirely to music of the Southwestern Indians. I did not buy the set when it came out because I spotted at least one "phony" in it — inevitable when a stranger arrives in a pueblo with his recording equipment, unbriefed and unheralded, to record choice examples of "authentic Indian music." One has to have been around for a long time in order to distinguish between what is genuine and what the Indians may decide it would be best for the White stranger to put on his records.

Of far greater importance, and practically impossible to obtain, is Victor album P-49, *Indian Music of the Southwest, Vol. I*. So far as I know, Vol. II has never been released. These records were made by Laura Boulton, an anthropologist, working under the sponsorship of the

American Council of Learned Societies, the Carnegie Corporation, and the University of Chicago. In this album are sixteen songs of ten tribes, recorded on six 10-inch records. The recording was superbly achieved, the songs selected with discrimination, and the whole album intelligently got up by Victor, who furnished a handsome booklet written by Dr. Boulton herself. If Victor knew how many sets of these records they could sell to the Indians in the Southwest alone, year after year, they would lose no time in re-issuing it. [If this occurs a full discussion of this set will be published.—Ed.]

### Some Recent Sets

More recently — within the past year — three more sets of records of Southwestern music have appeared. One, an album also called *Indian Music of the Southwest*, has just been published by the famous old Sante Fé trading post of Candelario, and can be had from them for \$6.20, postpaid. It consists of eight songs from four tribes on four 10-inch discs. The album is attractively presented with a reproduction of a watercolor by Gerald Nailor, a well-known Navajo artist. All of these songs are excellent: authentic, fine performances. Candelario also publishes a single record of the famous comic song of the Rio Grande pueblos). *I Don't Care If You Marry Sixteen Times, I'll Still Get You*.

Another series of records of equal, possibly superior, merit is that published by "Tom-Tom", P.O. Box 1493, Albuquerque, New Mexico. This is the enterprise of Mr. Manuel Archuleta, a San Juan Pueblo Indian, who originally started recording the music of his race as a means of preserving it pure against the inroads that the trashier kinds of White music have lately been making in many of the pueblos. It was his intention at first to sell these records only among the Indian groups of the Southwest, but his discs were of such great interest, and were so splendidly recorded, that they soon gained for themselves a great circulation among whites as well. The music stores in this area can now scarcely keep them in supply. Mr. Archuleta has so far issued seven 10-inch discs containing 14 songs from 10 tribes. One of these records, of the two San Felipe songs, is at present out of print, but will shortly be re-issued.

None of them at present is issued in an album; but an album of three additional discs of Navajo, Hopi, and Zuni songs will appear in the near future. Test pressings of these, which I have heard, are very fine. The separate records already available may be ordered from Mr. Archuleta for \$1.05 each.

In addition to these records, there is an album of Seneca songs published by the U. S. Library of Congress, which I have not yet heard. In addition to this, there is an enormous amount of privately recorded material (that is, not under commercial label) housed in — among other places — the Library of Congress, various university anthropology departmental libraries (both in this country and in Europe), and a few notable private collections. A listing of these — complete, however, only to 1936 — is available for 25 cents in Bulletin No. 24 (April, 1936) and may be obtained through the American Council of Learned Societies 907 Fifteenth Street, Washington, D. C. This brochure is entitled "Research in Primitive and Folk Music in the United States, A Survey by George Herzog."

In the following discussion, I have designated in each case the source of the recording. Some records, to the best of my knowledge out of print, are included for obvious reasons. The letters (OP) indicate these.

**HOPÍ (Arizona):** *Chant of the Snake Dance* and *Chant of the Eagle Dance*. "Hopi Indian Chanters," with drum. (Group of W. A. Billingsley). Victor 20043, 10-inch. (OP)

So far as I have been able to discover, the "Group of W. A. Billingsley" recorded on this disc is one of many such groups that this gentleman, the owner of "Hopi House," a sort of trading post near Phoenix, Arizona, has for years been recruiting, often against official Hopi opposition, for tours to and performances at World's Fairs and similar congregations of tourists. The singers in this case are, in any event, indubitably Hopis, for they sing with a spirit and "bounce" to be found among no other Pueblo Indians save possibly the Zunis. I have played these records for a number of Hopi friends and they tell me that the songs here recorded are authentic Hopi ones, although there seems to be some question

about the accuracy of some of the Billingsley publicity concerning the nature of Hopi culture and their dances.

The Hopi Snake Dance, which attracts (and is misunderstood by) countless tourists every time it is given, is an extraordinary ceremony in which the men dance, unharmed, with live rattlesnakes. The music on this record starts with an unusually interesting drum-beat.

The reverse side contains an Eagle Dance song. This dance is one of the loveliest of the pueblo dances. In it, the dancers carry enormous wings of eaglefeathers and wear magnificent head-dresses, made of gleaming white eagle feathers in the shape of enormous eagles' heads. The dance is a symbolic portrayal of some of the observed characteristic motions of eagles.

The record, although out of print and hard to obtain, is worth hunting up; for it still sounds very fine despite its age, and the performance seems to me really first-rate.

#### **THE CANDELARIO RECORDS. Indian Music of the Southwest.**

[NOTE: It will be seen that this album bears the same title as that of the Laura Boulton album issued by Victor. The system used for numbering the records in this Candelario set is chaotic. Each record-side carries a different number; but if the reader counts songs from the beginning in pairs, he can easily determine which songs go together on which records, for they will be reviewed below in order.]

**APACHE:** *Mountain Spirits' Song* (Mescalero Apache Reservation, New Mexico) Male chorus with drum. Candelario No. C-481 (in Candelario Set *Indian Music of the Southwest*).

This song is used by the Apaches in the Mountain Spirits Ceremony during which prayers to the Mountain Spirits are offered requesting their aid in the preservation of health. The song shows very clearly the characteristics of Apache music remarked above — a strongly marked trochaic rhythm in the initial vocal line against an inexorably regular drum-stroke on the long accent. The vocal part, however, soon becomes hopelessly complicated by the insertion of extra

syllables and misplaced accents, accounting for the "Hoagy Carmichael effect." The song is made additionally interesting in its use of a "refrain." (It is almost as if the solo singer were singing the "verse," as it's called in popular music, and then joined by the chorus, accompanied by owl cries, in the "refrain.")

**APACHE:** *Sun Greeting Ceremony* (San Carlos Apache Reservation, Arizona). Male chorus with drum. Candelario No. C-4813 (in Candelario Set *Indian Music of the Southwest*).

The Sun Greeting Ceremony takes place early in the morning of the first day, and again early in the morning on the last day, of the Girls' Puberty Ceremony. This record shows, as does the Mountain Spirits' Song (*vide supra*) the inimitable characteristics of Apache music. The owl cries are again much in evidence.

**HOPÍ:** *War Dance Song*. Male chorus with drum and bells. Candelario No. C-483 (in Candelario Set *Indian Music of the Southwest*).

The Hopi Indians live in nine pueblos built on three high mesas in northeastern Arizona in the middle of the Navajo Reservation. They are unrelated in language to any of the New Mexican pueblos, but in many of their culture traits they bear a close resemblance to the Zuni. Their ritual and ceremonial calendar is elaborate and complex, being equalled in this respect only by the Zunian; and, together with the Zuni, they are the only pueblos where Whites may see the masked dances.

War dances were traditionally danced either in preparation for war or in celebration of victory. War, for the Pueblos, was usually defensive and was almost always fought against one of the surrounding nomadic tribes, whose habit was to wait until the sedentary pueblos had harvested their crops and then descend upon them to take what they could get. It might be remarked at this point that war among the American Indians was seldom the total war known among Whites. Often, in even a major engagement, no more than four of five scalps were taken. (Scalp-taking was itself never universal among American Indians). On

the other hand, descriptions of the utter horror of the Sioux (among the most "war-like" of the Indians) when the American Army first began killing their women and children, should be sufficient to make most Whites ashamed of their own race.

Many of the war dance songs of the Pueblos show a very rapid beat, and the dances which they are designed to accompany often consist of rapid steps. Such dances generally for individuals rather than groups, have usually been borrowed from the Comanche and other war-like Plains tribes. The dancers for these songs are gorgeously costumed and spectacular to watch, and though their steps are extremely intricate, I have never seen an Indian youth who did not handle his body superbly in this type of dance. These dances, by the way, can often be fully as exciting as anything in the best ballet.

The genuine Pueblo war dance, however, as distinguished from the borrowed variety, is a placid, formal group dance more in the usual Pueblo style.

The Hopi War Dance song on this record seems to be one of the borrowed ones. It is accompanied by a rapid, supple drum-beat, with bells; and throughout there are incessant, eerie, falsetto calls (probably from within the masks). There is a curious *ritardando* at the end of every "cadence" ("cadence" is in quotes because Indian music is never harmonic; but the psychological effect is, nevertheless, that of a cadence). The recording, as such, in this, as in all the other Candelario discs, is first-rate.

**HOPÍ:** *Butterfly Dance Song.* Male chorus with drum and bells. Candelario No. C-484 (in Candelario Set *Indian Music of the Southwest*).

The Butterfly Dance of the Pueblos is one of their most beautiful. The dancers ordinarily wear huge "butterfly" wings attached to their shoulders\*, magnificently painted with idealised or formalised designs based on those found in nature.

The present record illustrates strikingly the wonderfully vigorous and exuberant singing of the Hopis. The song is accom-

panied by the continuous falsetto calls noted in the War Dance Song above, and is tremendously exciting music even if one cannot picture in one's mind the actual dance and its setting.

**NAVAJO:** *Yei-Bi-Chai Song.* Male chorus with rattle. Candelario No. C-485 (in Candelario Set *Indian Music of the Southwest*).

The version of this song on the Boulton-Victor record is stupendous: sung very high with a marvelously ecstatic kind of tension in the extraordinary falsetto always used for this chant. Dr. Boulton does not say in her notes how she managed to get this sort of performance on records. I have heard such Yei-Be-Chai singing elsewhere only under the stars out in the Arizona mountains. The record-label says merely "Luckachukai, Arizona", which might mean either that it was recorded there or that the Navajos who made the record came from there. It is well-known that Dr. Boulton made many records at the Gallup Inter-Tribal Ceremonial some years ago, and for these festivities many Navajo singing groups compete for the honour of representing their tribe in the public performances. It may very well be that the singers recorded here are one of the winning groups, which would account for the high degree of polish in the performance heard on this record.

The present recording is another performance of the same chant by a different group. The performance is not as well "disciplined" as that on the Boulton-Victor record or as that on the Archuleta-Tom-Tom disc, reviewed below; but it must be pointed out that "well disciplined" singing of Navajo music is not necessarily a desideratum. In a state of nature, so to speak, well-disciplined singing (in the sense that the singers have spent long hours rehearsing) is not often found among the Navajo. With the Pueblos, on the other hand, everything is highly disciplined, and it is a serious ceremonial fault for anyone to make a mistake — but the Pueblo people have plenty of time for practising.

The Zuni, for example, do their own version of the Navajo Yei-Be-Chai during their great Shálako ceremonial in December. Though they imitate the high falsetto of

\*I have never seen a Butterfly dance at Hopi but am told that it differs considerably from the Butterfly dances of the Keresans in New Mexico. The latter do use the "wings" referred to above; the Hopis, I am told, do not.

the Yei-Bé-Chai gods and duplicate (with innumerable Zuni formalisations and refinements) the Navajo costumes and characteristic steps, the result is almost another thing altogether. The dance and the song have been drained of all their original wildly ecstatic character and formalised into a perfectly ordered work of Pueblo art, which is what happens almost every time the Zunis set their hands to a thing. The Navajos, who come annually to the Shálako by the thousands, stand around bug-eyed at what the Zunis have done to their dance and beg for repetitions in every house in which it is given. Frequently they even go to the length of catching hold of the dancers as they leave and drawing them back for yet another performance — a kind of encoring which our concert artists have yet to experience.\*\*

The performance on this record is exciting enough for most tastes and gives a very just notion of the quality of the music and the character of Navajo singing.

**NAVAJO:** "Squaw Dance" Song. Unaccompanied male chorus. Candelario No. C-486 (in Candelario Set *Indian Music of the Southwest*).

The "Squaw Dance", so-called by the Whites because it is one of the few Navajo dances in which mixed couples participate, is a part of the "Enemy Way" ceremony which has partially lost its original significance as a war ceremony and is now used as a curing ritual for illnesses thought to be caused by outsiders. It is also frequently used as the occasion for a social dance, Kluckhohn and Leighton in their book, *Children of the People* (Harvard Univ. Press), point out the analogy between this dance, used as a social occasion, and the debutante balls of the East Coast cities, at which, theoretically, the marriageability of young girls is announced. In this dance, couples dance arm in arm in what sometimes grows to be an immense circle. If a man wishes to quit the dance, he must pay his partner, in money or jewelry, according to what she considers his value; if he refuses to, or can-

not, pay, she can, and often does, make other claims upon him. The dance lasts all night.

Most of the ceremonies of the Navajos, who have recently been much in the public prints, are curing ceremonies, as distinguished in a very general way from Pueblo ceremonies, which are rain-making ceremonies. By and large, the Navajos are individualists, the Pueblos collectivists, and their respective musics differ accordingly. I find in most Navajo music a rhapsodic, an almost ecstatic, quality. The voice is produced in an altogether different manner, high in the throat and under great pressure. (For the Yei-Bé-Chai Chant, discussed later, a spine-chilling falsetto is employed.)

The songs used in the "Squaw Dance" vary from place to place and occasion to occasion. Various singers will know different ones, and will lead out from time to time with a new "tune," with which the others will join in as soon as it becomes recognizable.

These "leadings-out" are never real solos, however; and it must be pointed out that these "new tunes" are all very much of a piece with the rest of the "Squaw Dance" songs: the variations are sometimes minute, but even when they are not, their "Squaw Dance" character is unmistakable.

The above record contains essentially the same song (or songs) as on Victor disc 91-A (Boulton-Victor set). The most significant difference is that the present version is unaccompanied and that the rhythm is very strongly marked by accentuation in the voices. This produces an extraordinary effect, for the voices would sound unusual to the uninitiated listener without this accentuation. "Squaw Dances," as the Whites (and even the Navajos, when speaking to Whites) persist in calling them, are often impromptu affairs used as social dances. As there is sometimes no drum at hand in such cases, an unaccompanied version is perfectly authentic for recording.

**TAOS PUEBLO:** War Dance Song. Ponhue, Bilokila, Panchelo, and Tempayo (male chorus), with drums, rattles, whistles, and bells (probably on the legs of the dancers). Candelario No. C-487 (in Candelario Set *Indian Music of the Southwest*).

The Taos people do a particularly exciting

\*\*As an interesting sidelight to this, the Zuni Yei-bé-Chai apparently also have their claue, for at the Shálako in the houses where they danced, Zunis would circulate among their Navajo friends urging them to encore the Yei-bé-Chai by pulling at the dancers as they began to leave.



version of the War Dance, which is explicitly Comanche (the result, indubitably, of the long association of Taos Pueblo with the Plains Indians). This disc shows the typically rapid drum-beat, which is unrelated in its accent-pattern to the natural accents of the vocal line. The high-pitched whistles blown throughout add to the excitement of the music.

**TAOS PUEBLO:** Moonlight Song (Love Song). Ponhue, Bilokila, Panchelo, and Tempayo (male chorus unaccompanied). Candelario No. C-488 (in Candelario Set *Indian Music of the Southwest*).

Periodically, in Taos, the young men gather by the bridge across the rushing little mountain stream which tumbles through the pueblo and sing to the young girls by moonlight. The setting is of indescribable beauty and the effect of these songs, rolling sweetly out to the mountains which rim the pueblo, is powerful even to a non-Indian. What it must be to be a Taos Indian, who idealizes the significance of these songs and the circumstances surrounding their use, can only be guessed.

The song on this record is unaccompanied, the rhythm being marked entirely by vocal accent. It ends with the mating cry — appropriately enough, if one knows Taos boys — of the wolf.

**NOTE:** Candelario has also recorded on a single 10-inch disc the famous Rio Grande pueblo comic song, *I Don't Care If You Marry Sixteen Times, I'll Still Get You*, which has a refrain in English. It is much thought of by Whites who may or may not understand that sometimes, depending upon the whim of the singer, it can be made to include much bawdry (not in English) or indeed much of anything else that occurs to the singer. The Indian sense of ribaldry, incidentally, is highly developed, as is their sense of the ridiculous. The former is rather like that of the French, in that it assumes that everyone present has had equivalently adult experience. This attitude makes good ribaldry extremely funny to these people who do not regard any of the natural functions, including sex, as sacreligious or criminal. Unfortunately, the record in question has not reached me in time for inclusion in this review. (To be Continued)

## Editorial Notes

(Continued from page 285)

needle points such as experience proved to give the best reproduction. But now my new-fangled instrument cannot be counted upon as to what it will or will not do. No prima donna was more temperamental. I tried a player attachment for some of the new records and it just did not work out. Hence I am not happy, for I cannot count upon what the machine will or will not do with an old recording that formerly played as smoothly as cream and gave me the utmost pleasure nor with a modern recording which is supposed to be qualitatively better all around. Further, I have not completed my payments on this machine and to face new expense at this time is not too easy.

"High frequencies, super-duper reproduction, three speeds in records, television about to make obsolete radio — what next? Personally, being merely a music lover and a non-professional student of music from my earliest recollection, more interested in pure music than in frequencies, sound-tracks, speeds, etc., this is making me very sad. I am sending for the service man again and hoping that from him some aid and comfort may come, but he does not like music nor really appreciate my predicament, so of what I am no longer sure."

Both our correspondents, and the quoted friend are true music lovers who enjoy their phonograph music for direct rather than indirect listening. If they read scores, their enjoyment would be even greater, for the absorption with the written music and its reproduction would shut-off all extraneous disturbances, which can occur even at home. Our advice to both would be to continue enjoying music as they did in the past, but not to overlook new developments completely. Both of these listeners would surely acquire great comfort from long playing records. It is possible to replace their present pickups with a more desirable one, and it is possible to replace their present motors with a unit that would permit (with the use of the handy stroboscope) playing at the slower speeds of 33 and 45. Naturally, the pickup should have two types of needles and for the best results in this we would recommend two cartridges, one with the cor-



rect stylus for l.p.s., which would play the 45s, and one for the old and any new 78 records. It is our belief that neither of these listeners, nor any others who are similarly confused and disillusioned these days, will give up permanently the enjoyment of recorded music. As for the betterment of records and performances, this is an inevitability, for any product of the machine age can hardly be expected to remain at a standstill. It is not, however, something that commands complete endorsement by everybody. The old records still give pleasure, and the proof of it remains in the multiplying urge of collectors. And, since the old records continue to give pleasure, we still write about them. The record field is not one in which any person, who likes music, can be one-sided. Most of the 78s being sold these days at half price may well become tomorrow's rarities. More on this next month.



## Recent Importations

▲Another major gramophone accomplishment to reach us is the French Columbia recording of Offenbach's delightful masterpiece, *Contes d'Hoffmann*, performed by forces of the Opera-Comique under the direction of **Andre Cluytens** (Fr. Col. LFX794/809). Recorded in the Theatre des Champs Elysees in March 1948, this presentation is a faithful reproduction of a capably mounted Paris production, emphasizing the vices and virtues of available local talent.

By international standards the vocalism leaves a good deal to be desired. The tenor **Raoul Jobin** is bothered by the high tessitura of Hoffman's role, resorting to yelling and other strained sounds to maintain altitude. The three leading ladies — **Bovy, Doria, and Geori-Boue** — sing with suitable Gallic vivacity and shrillness; the men — the producer has seen fit to assign the four roles usually sung by one artist to four dif-

ferent singers — are in general very good. Particularly agreeable is **Charles Soix's** sonorous projection of Dapertutto's air, *Scintille, diamants*.

In spite of the vocal shortcomings, which are no more than one would expect to find in the average performance at any major opera house, this set has many enjoyable moments and should be an important addition to operatic libraries. One of its most satisfactory features is the employment of the monologist-comedian **Bourvil** (si peu tenor, as the accompanying notes describe him) in the comic tenor parts. Unquestionably, a great deal of thought and planning went into the preparation of this set.

At the risk of boring the many opera addicts who labor under the delusion that sopranos and tenors are the main dish, and that one only suffers the lower voices their bit because every plot must have its villain, I want to devote some space to the Italian baritone **Paolo Silveri**, a pillar of the Covent Garden season for the past several years, who has recorded an excellent series of arias for English Columbia. These discs should appeal to students, for, once they have done envying **Silveri** his fine voice and effortless production, they can hear straight-forward interpretations of these standard arias uncluttered by personal idiosyncrasies and arty emendations. **Gino Bechi**, who is very well thought of in Italy, has recorded most of these same selections for Italian HMV, so that two ranking baritones enjoying the luxuries of modern audio engineering technique can be compared on equal ground.

**Silveri** is most successful in lyric passages; his *Dio possente* (*Faust*) and *Di provenza* (*Traviata*) — both on Col. DX1483 — are the best now available. I like the flowing tempo of his *Deh, vieni alla finestra* (*Don Giovanni*) better than **Tito Gobbi's** more sluggish version (Italian HMV DA5430), which, however, has the correct mandolin accompaniment, not the plucked fiddles of the **Silveri** disc. Coupled with this (on Eng. Col. DB2428) is a very beautiful, seldom heard aria from Donizetti's *La Favorita*, *Vien Leonora a piedi tuoi*, in which King Alfonso XI of Spain passionately offers his love (he was already married, of course) to the beauteous Leonora Guzman. **Silveri** sings only the first part, which is just as well; the second half is rather an

anti-climax. Listen to the unusually pure quality of the flute in the introductory phrases.

**Silveri's** *Credo* (*Otello*) is less impassioned than **Bechi's**, but better sung. Paired with this is *Eri tu* (*Ballo in Maschera*) on Eng. Col. DX1367. I prefer **Bechi's** version (HMV DB5369) here, though the old recording by Tibbett (Victor 7353) is still memorable, despite the slovenly orchestral accompaniment. On the back of *Nemico dalla patria* (*Andrea Chenier*) (Eng. Col. DX1521) **Silveri** sings *O Carlo, ascolta* (*Don Carlos*). This touching air is the second half of the scena, the death of Rodrigo, which has been recorded by **Gobbi** (HMV DB5447) beginning with the recitative, *Son io, mio Carlo* and including the air, *Per me giunto*. **Bechi's** *Cortigiani* (*Rigoletto*) (HMV DB5369) outranks **Silveri's** (Eng. Col. DX1432); the latter has a tendency to smooth off the dramatic edges of a fiery declamation with too much legato phrasing. **Silveri** backs this with the *Largo al factotum* (*Barbiere di Siviglia*), which has been better done by others. To conclude, **Silveri** has joined *Pari siamo* (*Rigoletto*) with *Il balen* (*Trovatore*) on Eng. Col. DX1461. For a more dramatic portrayal of *Il balen*, without the recitative *Tutto e deserto*, try **Bechi** on Italian HMV DA5405.

In striking contrast to the high quality of the artistry detailed above is a new recording (the second, at least, by this singer) of *Eri tu* by the veteran baritone **Giovanni Ingerhilleri**, the Amonasro of Victor's early *Aida* set. The quality of his natural voice is unusually rich and spacious, but throat-choking sobs, off-pitch yelling, and all the evils of the operatic trade that are nurtured in the provincial opera houses are demonstrated here at no advance in price. If you want to hear for yourself, the record is HMV B9712.

Some time ago we received a ballet suite arranged by Gordon Jacob from Lecocq's comic opera *Mlle Angot* (HMV C3807/8). Despite a mediocre performance this delectable little potpourri made an immediate hit with our friends. The gaiety of the rhythms and freshness of the melodies was reminiscent of Offenbach's best efforts, the whole tastefully realized by the skill of the orchestrator. Now comes the second suite (HMV C3845/6) arranged by Jacob from

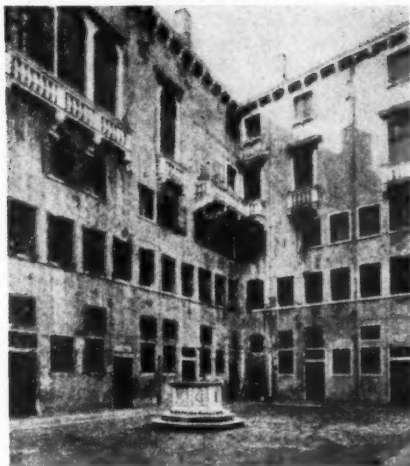
the Act II ballet music, which, it must be reported, is something of a disappointment. The best bits of the opera were evidently culled for Suite I; Suite II is agreeable but strictly second-best. Added to this, the enervating activities of one **Hugo Rignold** on the podium annihilate whatever vitality might have lurked helplessly in the hearts of Covent Garden's jaded instrumentalists. **Rignold** is said now to be conductor of the **Liverpool Philharmonic**; one deplores the shortage of competent batonists in England.

Some of our most sophisticated friends may turn up their noses at the obvious gymnastics of Liszt's bombastic *Hungarian Fantasia*. In the right hands, however, it can be fully as blood-tingling as a Western extravaganza. The recent release (HMV C3761/2) by **Solomon** is just that. This set is one of the finest recreations of piano and orchestra tone I have ever heard; emphatically, the engineers must have a gold star on their report cards for this one. **Solomon's** prodigious dexterity and vital enthusiasm, bridled by unfailing good taste, have infused new courage into this much-belabored score. The overworked, under-rehearsed **Philharmonia Orchestra**, spurred on by the incisive leadership of **Walter Suesskind**, ably second the pianist's notable effort.

*La Cambiale di Matrimonio* was Rossini's first opera, written when he was but 18. Its charming overture, surprisingly overlooked by those Rossini specialists, Toscanini and Beecham, has now been recorded for the first time by **Vincenzo Bellezza** and the **Augusteo Orchestra of Rome** (Eng. Col. DX1522). This disc is highly recommended, not only for the captivating sprightliness of its melodies, but also for the zestful performance by one of Europe's best orchestras. The full round tones of the woodwind and brass are especially pleasing.

Good records of unaccompanied choral music are rare enough. When one combines the impeccable musicianship and vintage mellowness of the **Danish State Broadcasting Madrigal Choir** conducted by **Mogens Woeldike** with the inspired works of Giovanni Gabrieli, a jealously rare atmosphere is created. A *Jubilate deo* for 8 voices is on Eng. Col. DDX20, a *Benedictus* for 12 voices and a piece by Schuetz on DDX21.

(Continued on page 324)



Church House of the Basilica of S. Marco, Venice, where Monteverdi lived and died.

# MADRIGALS OF MONTEVERDI

## TWO UNUSUAL RECORDINGS

**MONTEVERDI:** Madrigals, Volume 1 — *Lamento d'Arianna* (5 sides); *Ecco mororar l'onde* (1 side); *Zefiro torna* (1 side); *La Piaga* (1 side). Madrigals, Volume II — *Lagime d'amante al sepolcro dell'amata* (6 sides); *O mirtillo* (1 side); *Ch'io t'ami* (1 side). Sung by **Ensemble Vocal M. Couraud**. Les Discophiles Francais sets, price \$10.00 each.

**I**N THE MIDST of plenty, rather than famine, in the record world comes these two sets from France, offering unusual experiences in music. The art of Monteverdi, one of the great formative geniuses of music history, remains an uncommonly rewarding experience to all who have listened with receptive ears.

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) who came midway between Palestrina and Bach, remains for far too many, a composer buried in history; yet it was he who made the opera the most popular form of interest in Italy and an accepted art form far beyond the borders of his native land. How gratifying-

ly it must have been to him to see six years before his death the establishment at Venice of the first opera house. Where his predecessors had been content to pursue "structural texture of composition as an end in itself", Monteverdi with revolutionary daring enlarged the vocabulary of harmony and specifically used the instruments of his orchestra to outline and color dramatic situations. He advanced the significance of the poetic text with an emotional ardor that realized its dramatic possibilities in expression. There is not only the distinctive delicacy, grace and suavity of the Latin temperament expressed in his music, but nobility, poetic beauty and dramatic power.

The first time I heard the music of Monteverdi was in Italy during my student days. It is difficult to say what element in it evoked a spell of enchantment that sent me scurrying to books on the composer and to scores of his music. A series of later madrigals performed in concert dispersed the idea that the madrigal form was a contemplative, idyllic

composition — representative of so much one finds in those charming volumes of *Arie antiche* that the Italians publish. In the hands of a man who knew how to express with vehement power, this form became something more — a chamber cantata of communicative force. Since that concert, I have heard more works by Monteverdi that substantiated the freshness, fervor, and beauty of my first contacts with his art.

Back in the early '30s, my late friend Paul Rosenfeld was doubtful of Monteverdi's popularity in a world of so much wider and more diversified modern interests. When the enterprising Juilliard School of Music gave the first New York performance of Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, he went to hear it with some reluctance and many doubts. Subsequently he wrote in glowing terms on the composer, for Paul discovered a new genius and went delving into literature, music, and recordings pertaining to Monteverdi. Summing up the genius of the composer, Paul wrote later: "What is matchless is the thoroughly severe, unaffected truth of all Monteverdi's various, beautifully, consummately musical communication of human forces, the light and roguish as well as the profound and tragic; and the truthfulness of their relevance to the dramatic situations with which they are connected." It was not just the opera which absorbed and claimed Paul's undivided attention for some time, but the sensitive and penetrating handling of "dramatic situations" in the madrigals, where Paul found a noble indifference to any mere theatrical effectiveness and virtuosic display.

### Patrician Art

Monteverdi's art was and is patrician. From his study of Plato, he learned much that greatly influenced his innately humanistic ideas and ideals. "When I was about to compose the lament of Ariadne," he wrote in a letter, "I could find no source which could enlighten me on natural methods of imitation, nor which would even authorize me to imitate, save Plato, and he in a manner so obscure, that, with my feeble comprehension, I could scarcely understand the little which he revealed." Henri Prunières, quoting this passage in his book on the composer, says: "While pedants were laboriously discussing the modes and metres of ancient

music, Monteverdi, by the intuition of genius, had discovered their imitation of nature as Greek artists had understood it." In his early work, the composer had concentrated his efforts mainly upon melody and on harmony as an added means of powerful expression, but Plato awoke him to the values of rhythm, which "together with melody, was the very essence of music".

### Music That Lives

Far from being a man buried in history, Monteverdi is a composer of music alive today in its deep feeling, insight and dramatic puissance. Though his operas remain dated in their stagecraft, a thorough study of the music makes ever plainer the resemblance of Monteverdi to Wagner, Moussorgsky, Debussy and all the rest of the great composers "who have expressed essences in the realistic forms of music drama". Hence one can understand why d'Indy could say to Debussy, after noting his employment of the recitative style in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, "You are our Monteverdi." Monteverdi's fame was based on more than his operatic compositions. The madrigal, one of the most popular forms of his day, was with him a favorite secular vehicle. Though he added instrumental accompaniment to some of his later madrigals, he wrote the majority for unaccompanied voices. Prunières cites *O Mirtillo* as an exception (included in Album II — see above) and this undoubtedly accounts for the inclusion in various albums of *Arie antiche* of some of the madrigals in solo form. The unaccompanied madrigals contain a rich storehouse of expressive melodic invention and subtle rhythmic devices. Unfortunately most of these pieces are too little known and when they are performed are usually poorly attended. Has the expression of music by an *a capella* group become so acutely associated in the minds of modern music listeners with the past, which for far too many remains shrouded in history, that the exclusion of instruments prevents appreciation? I wonder!

I have long held in esteem Monteverdi's Madrigal-Sestina, *Lagrime d'amante al sepolcro dell'amata* (*Tears of the Lover at the Tomb of the Beloved*). Its first appearance on records, sung by the famous Cantori Bolognesi (Columbia set 218), prompted me to write an article on the composer and his music and to make a singable translation of the text of

this work. This article and text were used by Columbia as a booklet. The issue (July 1935) of this magazine 'containing same' is fortunately still available for those who may be interested. Inasmuch as that early recording (made around 1928) was far from satisfactory with its diffusion of line and phrase, due to the dead acoustic characteristics of the studio in which too large a chorus had been enlisted for a most intimate work, I welcome this new and clearer reproduction of the score.

### A Deeply Moving Work

This composition is a deeply moving expression of sorrow in which the "grief-stricken lover calls on the dryads, the nymphs, the whole of nature to share in his grief." The intricate character of the sestina (a sixth stanza poem, each stanza containing six lines) requires that the terminal words of the initial verse be repeated at the end of the lines in the others, though in different order. A full discussion of the form of the poem and its use of word-terminals, etc., is included in my article already mentioned. No booklet, translation or notes of any kind accompany the above records, an omission which is lamentable.

The singing of the small and intimate group, directed by M. Couraud, is of a high order, and on my set the acoustic quality of the reproduction is lucid, well defined without any sharpness of tonal quality or resonant diffusion. However, the quality of the women's voices is less resonant in the lower range than those of the men, but in the higher tessitura their voices are often floated with a lovely limpidity of tonal production. The expressive qualities of the music are acquired more through the sensitive direction of the conductor than through any personal predilections in feeling for the text by the singers. The use of tenors, singing an octave higher, in place of the second altos seems to me an especially laudable procedure though the tonal effects on occasion would have been better served had this line in the music been divided between tenors and altos, as the composition is written for five voices and sometimes the masculine element predominates too strongly. However, purely from a standpoint of esthetics, this serves to remind us that it is the lover who voices his grief — the grief of a man deeply troubled and submerged in an anguish which prompts

him to seek assuagement from an outer world like the Greeks of old. The clarity of lines and balance of the parts in the recording is so far ahead of the older set in revealing the significance and beauty of Monteverdi's writing that one, admiring this music, can only be grateful for this better all-around performance and reproduction.

The nobility of this work can not fail to impress, though to some the strangeness of its idiom may ask for more than one hearing. For as I have said above, not all music listeners are attuned to unaccompanied singing. Of this music the French musicologist, André Tessier, has said: "This is truly Latin art, the art of Virgil, very moving by reason of the sincerity of the emotion expressed, both true and beautiful in form."

### Arianna's Lament

The advent of a complete recording of the *Lamento d'Arianna* is equally as welcome as the Sestina, for here is incontestably Monteverdi's finest dramatic expression, in which grief is expressed with a patrician majesty and a classical simplicity recalling "the masterpieces of ancient Greece". It is an expression of heart-rending anguish devoid of the excesses of many later-day dramatic writers. One of the essential qualities of the great art of all ages, serenity in expression, prevails, which gives this work a true immortality in the realm of music. Though written for solo voice, its appearance in madrigal form for five voices was made by the composer much to the displeasure of at least one contemporary musician, the distinguished Florentine composer Giovanni Battista Doni, who claimed that Monteverdi had "disfigured the pearl of his compositions."

Inasmuch as the only existing recordings of *Arianna's Lament* hardly substantiate its classical simplicity of style, the advent of the complete work (only the first of its four parts was included in choral form in the Victor-Boulanger set) in an approved form by the composer can only be welcomed by scholars as well as his admiring music listeners. The gifted Italian soprano, Gabriella Gatti, has twice recorded a modern transcription of this work (Cetra disc BB25087 and H.M.V. DB6515). I was given to believe that the versions were different, the one by Cetra being authentic, the other admittedly on the label a trumped-up arrangement by



Respighi with a modern orchestral accompaniment. Study of the score proves both recordings stem from the same arrangement (though the Cetra label does not give any credit) the difference being a larger orchestra employed in the English disc. Respighi's arrangement is one which over-dramatizes parts of the text and alters and shortens considerably its pattern, placing the deeply moving first section of the original at the end instead of the beginning. Two lines of the opening section are used by Respighi as an orchestral prelude. His arrangement in part also lifts the tessitura a third higher than the original.

### Redeeming Artistry

While it can and should be admitted that Gatti by the beauty and poise of her artistry makes the modernized opus a moving thing, the true essence of this scene — an expression of every aspect of grief — "desire for death, dejection, anguish, self-pity, revolt and despair" — are more nobly expressed in the original. Rightfully Prunières says "the great power of this Lament resides less in its plastic beauty than in the variety and intensity of its dramatic feeling", yet in the Respighi arrangement one feels the plastic beauty is lost in the heightening of the intensity of the dramatic expression and the modernization of the accompaniment. At one point Respighi inserts a wailing instrumental theme of his own device over the voice. The Couraud singers do justice to this music though some of the criticism made above is applicable to their performance.

Two tragedies in Monteverdi's life actuated the depth of feeling expressed in the music of the Madrigal-Sestina and of *Arianna's Lament*. These were the deaths, separated by only six months, of the composer's wife and the much admired and highly gifted young singer, Caterinuccia Martinelli, the latter a favorite pupil of Monteverdi for whom the part of Arianna was intended. The Sestina was written in memory of the lovely Caterinuccia.

*Arianna's Lament* remains the only surviving music of Monteverdi's opera *Arianna*, which from contemporary reports seems to have been his greatest music drama. As the *Lament* was the highlight of the opera and

an excerpt to which the composer attached particular importance, it is fortunate that it has come down to us. In its time, it was sung throughout Italy. The tragedy, written by the poet Octavio Rinuccini, was modelled on the plan of the ancient Greek drama and has to do with the love of Theseus and Ariadne (in Italian Teseo and Arianna) and the warrior's abandonment of the latter. In the original performance an epilogue effecting a happy ending was added at the instigation of the Duchess of Mantau, "who found the subject a little gloomy for performance at a wedding". In a tragedy of such majestic dignity, that final act must have proved anticlimactic coming as it did after the scene of Arianna's lamentations. It is quite possible it was dropped in other performances of the work and certainly, if the score existed in its entirety, one could not imagine its inclusion today in performance.

### The Shorter Works

The other madrigals, included in the two sets, offer fine examples of Monteverdi's earlier and later artistry. The *Ecco mormorar l'onde* is one of his loveliest early works, a pastoral poem set in delicately lyrical mood. *Zefiro torna* is a joyous though contemplative song of spring, with a fascinating interplay of contrapuntal imitations. Both of these compositions were included in the Monteverdi-Boulanger album, issued in 1938 by Victor (set 496), for which I did the notes and the translations, the *Zefiro torna* being used in an arrangement for two tenors with continuo accompaniment. The present version proves more interesting with its more consistent variety of harmonic texture. The other madrigals show the depths of Monteverdi's articulation of the human heart and its passions in his latter compositions. *La Piaga (The Wound)* and *Ch'io t'ami (That I Have Loved You)*, with their unusual harmonic coloring and fascinating rhythmic devices are most expressive. There is some strikingly beautiful melodic writing in the tenor part of the former. The three are true examples of the chamber cantata style, and one suspects that *Ch'io t'ami*, as well as *O Mirtillo*, would be as effectively rendered by a solo voice with instrumental ensemble. —P-H.R.





# RECORD NOTES AND REVIEWS

## FOREWORD

▲The undeniably unsettled conditions in the record field have retarded the manufacture of many of the latest records. At the end of May, we had only received a very small portion of the new releases. Hence our publication date had to be advanced. Victor sent out 45 pressings to many of us who were not equipped to handle them. A promised extended-range player, due the middle of May, has not reached us at the time of publication. Most of the latest issues of Capitol-Telefunken are delayed, as are the first issues of Deutsche Grammophon. These will be reviewed later. No new issues of the excellent Decca FFRR have been received.

Readers write asking us where can they buy or hear certain recordings already advertised. If your dealer stocks these issues he is best qualified to tell you when they will be in stock. Reconversion in any business is apt to hold up production. So we can only bid those eager record buyers to be patient. In recent years, in many fields, there has been a tendency to announce products ahead of their appearance on the market

to incite public curiosity and anticipation. This has proved an annoying business to many people. It is doubtful, however, that this method of marketing has been adopted by the record industry. It is our belief that factors, quite beyond the control of manufacturers, have contributed to the delay in advertised products. In one case, we know that recordings announced by one enterprising company were so badly pressed that they turned down the whole shipment to obtain better pressings.—Ed.



**DANISH 'POP' CONCERT:** *Fantasia on South Jutland Songs* (Reesen); *Dream Visions* (Lumbye); *Aladdin — Negro Dance and Oriental Procession* (Nielsen); **Copenhagen Royal Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Emil Reesen, Georg Hoeberg, and Johan Hye-Knudsen**. London Records set LA83, three discs, price \$7.00.

**NIELSON**, who was Denmark's foremost composer in modern times, contributes

the best music in this album. The two pieces, from music he wrote to Oehlenschläger's drama, *Aladdin*, undoubtedly based on the *Arabian Nights*, show his skill and originality. There is almost a Russian tang to these selections, especially the *Negro Dance*, but it can hardly be termed influenced by Rimsky-Korsakoff. It is a zestful handling of dance patterns with quasi-oriental effects in the orchestration. The *Oriental Procession* is full-blooded, suggesting the cortège of a potentate.

Emil Reesen's potpourri of South Jutland tunes is not without appeal. It is the sort of music that people appreciate at "pops" concerts when spirits lag and relaxation is in order. One does not have to be Danish born to enjoy this sentimental, folksy suite, though one familiar with the tunes would have greater reason to appreciate the work.

Lumbye, sometimes called the Danish counterpart of Vienna's Josef Lanner, also writes in a sentimental vein. The program of his work is the sequence of dreams of a young girl, where a wholesome sweetness and simplicity prevails. There is a charm in the latter part of this tone poem in which the maiden dreams of the countryside and the composer quotes the first theme from *The Shepherd's Hymn* from Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* in a sequence of bucolic elation. Though Lumbye's dance music recalls Lanner, his *Dream Visions* suggest a Danish Grieg.

The performances have been entrusted to sympathetic hands, which is as it should be, and the recording, bright, clear and sonorous, is undisturbed by surface sound. —J.N.

**DELIBES:** *Ballet Music from Coppelia and Sylvia*; **Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Fabien Sevitzky**, Victor set DM-1305, five 12-inch discs, price \$7.25, or set WDM-1305, five 7-inch discs, price \$5.25.

**RCA VICTOR** says these performances comprise delightful and relaxing summer listening. Three excerpts from each ballet are included: *Dance of the Automaton*, *Waltz* and *Czardus* from *Coppelia*, and *Valse lente*, *Pizzicati* and *Cortège of Bacchus* from *Sylvia*. Those who have bought the small 45 portable machine will find this little package of discs one that can readily accompany them on a vacation. For more permanent

listening of Delibes' ballet music, one suspects the listener will turn elsewhere. The Lambert performance of the greater part of the *Coppelia* score is available on Columbia l.p. 4145. *Sylvia* is best represented in Decca set EDA 5 in a performance by Stanford Robinson and the BBC Theatre Orchestra. It contains six selections from the ballet.

While Sevitzky traverses this music with his usual assurance, previously recorded excerpts from *Coppelia* by Fiedler and the Boston "Pops" are by no means outmoded, and both Lambert and Robinson provide competition in matters of reproduction and interpretation. —P.G.

**PROKOFIEV:** *Scythian Suite, Op. 20*; **Philadelphia Orchestra** conducted by **Eugene Ormandy**. Columbia set MM-827, three discs, price \$4.00, or Microgroove disc ML4142, price \$4.85.

**COLUMBIA** has recorded a performance by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra of Prokofiev's *Scythian Suite* that is notable for execution and clarity. In this recording Mr. Ormandy shows the listener, by perceptively illuminating the abundant detail of the score, how this wonderful piece goes, how it is made.

This aspect of his performance cannot fail to please those who missed hearing many of the secondary parts in RCA Victor's recent recording of this work (DM-1040 — Chicago Orchestra conducted by Desire Defauw). Many who know the *Scythian Suite* only through Defauw's recording will be delighted to hear a clean account of all of the notes and will realize from the experience the astonishing variety of Prokofiev's musical fancy at this stage of his career.

Unfortunately, however, the Columbia recording does not do this music complete justice. It is clear but cold in sound, and the microphone placement is, for me, a great disappointment. There is a lack of spaciousness, of proper dissemination of sound in space that makes the recording sound as if the "mikes" were right in front of and over the orchestra.

Now the RCA Victor set does have spaciousness and warmth of sound, even if all of the loud passages are marred by ugly reverberation. And, in fairness to Mr. Defauw, it should be noted that it is hard for

one to tell, because of this reverberation, whether the lack of clarity in his performance is his or the engineer's fault. With this one reservation Defauw's performance is excellent in every way. Especially outstanding is the smooth way in which he handles the transitions from one musical idea to another. Indeed, he solves this problem better than Ormandy.

In view of the conflicting merits and faults of the two recordings, I should advise the reader who owns the Defauw recording to hang on to it; but if there is a choice to be made in the purchase of one or the other, I believe I would choose the Ormandy performance.

—C.J.L.

**ROSE:** *Holiday For Strings*, and *Our Waltz*; **Boston "Pops" Orchestra**, conducted by **Arthur Fiedler**. Victor 7-inch disc 49-0407, price 95c, or disc 10-1311, price \$1.00.

The Boston "Pops" are in the groove with the ever reliable Arthur Fiedler giving first rate performances to two familiar and popular pieces which radio has almost killed. Good recording from the 45. —P.G.

**VIVALDI:** *Concerto Grosso in G minor, Op. 3, No. 2*; **Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino**, conducted by **Antonio Guarnieri**. Capitol-Telefunken set EBL-8005, two discs, price \$3.75.

**VIVALDI**, who has been somewhat patronized by historians, is beginning to come into his own. In his day he was probably overshadowed by Corelli and Scarlatti, and because of this historians seem to have overlooked his best qualities. We generally read that his importance lies "in consequence of the fact that Bach arranged a number of the violin concertos for harpsichord." As more and more of Vivaldi's music comes to light, he is finding wider praise, and much of his music already known is being revalued by musicologists and critics. A long time ago I discovered that Vivaldi's concerto grossos sustained more frequent performance than some by Bach and Handel. The present work is a case in point. Guarnieri, a sympathetic and understanding interpreter of earlier Italian music, recorded this work back in 1928 for Italian H.M.V. That earlier release has been an old friend

during the years and long ago those records began to show wear. Hence, the present set, which is excellently recorded, is most welcome, for the sonorities of the string writing and the nuances of the conductor's performances are better substantiated.

This opus, comes from a group of similar works to which Vivaldi gave the title, *Estro armonico*. To translate literally "estro" presents a problem — for the word means "poetic rage" (or ardor) or enthusiasm. Thus the title might be termed "harmonic fervor". It is descriptive of Vivaldi's music. The style here is the familiar concerto grosso employing two contrasting groups of instruments, in this case a solo group of two violins and cello and the usual body of strings (*tutti*). Four delightful movements make up this work: two slow ones in which tonal opulence and poetic nobility are sustained, and two fast ones which are full of infectious rhythmic life and elation. I suggest that the interested reader sample first the third movement, a *Larghetto* of great beauty, for it alone provides a just reason to have the set wrapped up.

—P.H.R.

**WAGNER:** *Die Meistersinger — Prelude*; **Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra**, conducted by **Willem Mengelberg**. Capitol-Telefunken disc 89-80036, price \$1.25.

**THIS RECORDING** is distinguished by its clarity of detail and the fine playing of the orchestra. The recording is often too reverberant and lacking in brightness of the work. Mengelberg handles the theme of the Mastersingers in a compelling, forthright manner. In the more lyrical motives his reading suffers from a matter-of-factness that robs these sections of their poetic expressiveness. A lack of animation in the phrasing of the final pages takes away a good deal of the music's brilliance. Both the Toscanini and the Beecham versions are preferred.

—P.H.R.

**WILLIAMS:** *Fantasia on Welsh Nursery Tunes* (3 sides); **The London Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Mansel Thomas**, and **DAVIES:** *Minuet and Trio — Gwenllïan's Delight*; **The Boyd Neel String Orchestra**, conducted by **Mansel Thomas**. London Records set LA82, two discs, price \$5.00.

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THE composer of the *Fantasia*, Grace Williams, was a pupil of Vaughan Williams (no relationship is intimated). Like her illustrious teacher, she has found folk tunes an inspirational source for much of her music. Her *Fantasia* has proved most popular in England, which is understandable for there is spontaneity and freshness in this work, and a freedom from pretention. Moreover, the lady knows how to orchestrate in a vivid and colorful manner. The traditional tunes are appealing while the original thematic material shows Miss Williams' natural feeling for graceful melody. The resonant Kingsway Hall recording gives a concert hall reality to the performance.

Hubert Davies (another Welsh composer) also favors folk tunes. The *Minuet and Trio* is taken from a suite for strings based on Welsh airs. It is a delicate, mild-mannered piece, too much over-shadowed by the *Fantasia*. Perhaps it would be better appreciated heard as a part of the work for which it was devised. —P.H.R.

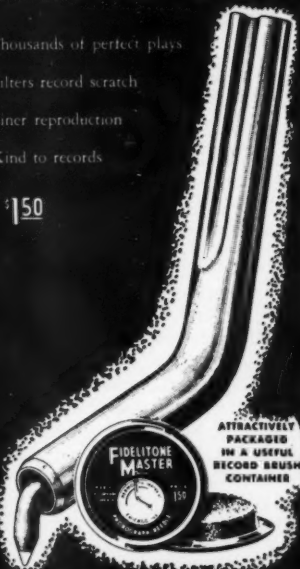
**SCRIABIN:** *Poem of Ecstasy, Op. 54*; **San Francisco Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Pierre Monteux**. Victor set DM-1270, two discs, price \$2.50.

THE VOGUE for Scriabin's works has reached a low ebb in recent years, with the result that performances of his more extended orchestral pieces have been few and far between. Works such as the *Poem of Ecstasy* have been studiously ignored by program makers. At one time Scriabin's creative efforts were considered an important factor in musical trends, many informed musical personages permitting themselves to be shocked, annoyed, or stunned by the concentrated power of his impressionistic mysticism.

That his musical output was conceived only to satisfy his own inner need for tangible expression, there seems to be little doubt. There is no compromise with the conventional requirements of the paying listener. The tonal colorings of Scriabin's orchestral palette are cleverly laid on, but, for the most part, are insistently harsh and garish. For this reason, the music is not easy to live with, and while an occasional full-scale performance in the concert hall might make a momentarily favorable impression, repeated playings of these discs in the limited con-

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fines of the home are apt to become somewhat indigestible.

Monteux's reading, however, is exemplary; his forces are well recorded. Addition of this title to one's collection should be considered, if only to acquire a sensitively wrought example of this admirable conductor's abilities with music outside the standard repertoire.

—A.W.P.



**MOZART:** *Concerto No. 1 in B flat, K. 191* (bassoon and orchestra); **Leonard Sharrow**, NBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by **Arturo Toscanini**. Victor set DM-1304, two discs, price \$2.50, or set WMD, two 7-inch discs, price \$2.20.

IT WAS assuredly a friendly gesture on Toscanini's part to exploit the artistry of his bassoon player, Mr. Sharrow. Though he is a capable performer on his instrument, he does not retard memories of Archie Camden or Ferdinand Oubradous. Moreover, the spotlight seems more on the conductor than the soloist in this performance, perhaps because Toscanini's spirited playing of the opening and closing movements has an intensified urge to it which seems to press the soloist on occasion.

Of the three bassoonists, who have recorded this music Camden is the greatest artist and musicians have treasured his recording for many years. The late Sir Hamilton Harty was his knowing and poised conductor. As this set was issued nearly two decades ago, it has not the tonal coloring to be found in either the Oubradous-Bigot set (Victor 704—1940) or the present set. Oubradous remains an admirable artist and he can handle difficult passages with expressive skill. For my own part, his version would not be removed from my library in favor of this new one.

Dating from Mozart's 18th year, this work reflects a youthful spirit. Though manufactured to order for an amateur aristocrat it is not without appeal if one likes the featured instrument. There is humor and melodic grace in the opening *Allegro vivace*, and some delightful interplay between the soloist and the orchestra in the final rondo. The slow

movement remains the real surprise, for one hardly expects the bassoon to be exploited so poetically.

The recording is good, though it does not measure up to the best of the recent Toscanini issues, and the 45 revealed no marked improvement over the 78 version in my estimation.

—P.H.R.

**MOZART:** *Concerto No. 9 in E flat, K. 271*; **Gaby Casadesus** (piano) with **Lamoureux Orchestra**, conducted by **Paul Paray**. Vox set 650, four discs, price \$5.00.

THIS is one of Mozart's finest piano concertos, written for a talented Parisian virtuoso — Mlle. Jeunehomme, who visited the parochial-bound Salzburg Court during his twenty-first year. The form of the work shows daring and considerable ingenuity on the part of the youthful composer and repays some study. This is the first of the important scores in its genre that he was to bequeath to posterity. Mme. Casadesus plays it cleanly and neatly with a crispness in the fast movements which makes for orderliness, but there is little emotion. One can imagine these movements performed on a harpsichord in this manner, perhaps in Mozart's time, though he actually wrote the work with the piano in mind. Gieseeking handled these movements with more expressive shading, but he did not play more warmly or tenderly than Mme. Casadesus in the slow movement.

This heartfelt *Andantino* seems to belong to feminine fingers. Paray handles the orchestral part admirably with careful adjustments of dynamics and fine phrasing. These French musicians are meticulous performers and always worth hearing.

The recording is good, especially the piano tone, though there is little enlivening room resonance. But the intimate qualities of the music are well served by this type of reproduction. The overall clarity is better than in the older Gieseeking set, made a dozen years ago. One hardly realizes certain favorite recordings have acquired an age until forced to greet a new one. Though not an extended range recording, this one must be admitted an advance over the former set. Moreover, Vox's record surfaces are smoother. As this performance is scheduled for early release on a long-playing disc, those

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**BEETHOVEN:** *Sonata No. 1 in D major, Op. 12, No. 1*; **Joseph Szigeti** (violin) and **Mieczyslaw Horzowski** (piano). Columbia set MX-312, two discs, price \$3.00, or Microgroove disc ML 4133, price \$4.85.

**SZIGETI'S** vital and penetrating artistry is most rewarding in this early work of Beethoven. Moreover, he has one of the finest partners in the field for collaboration in chamber music. Horzowski's piano playing and style match that of the violinist on every page, as it did in those rare recordings which he accomplished with Casals some years ago. Moreover, the recording achieves an equitable balance. Last December we had the Heifetz-Bay performance of this work, admirable for its tonal luster and stylistic finesse, but emotionally more phlegmatic than the present version. If Szigeti does not achieve the consistent tonal suavity of Heifetz, he makes up for its lack in his vitality and more personalized conception of the work.

It does much, in my estimation, for making this early work of Beethoven consistently enjoyable in performance, apart from just beauty of tone and artistic refinement. There is an enlivening freshness in the handling of the melodies of the opening movement and a sparkle in the simple charm of the final rondo from Szigeti and Horzowski which is most welcome. If one has already bought the Heifetz-Bay set, it is unlikely replacement would be considered. Both performances have their attributes and a choice between them will unquestionably be governed by personal predilections. The long-playing version is most satisfying, and the inclusion of the Szigeti-Foldes' performance of the Schubert *Sonatina, Op. 137, No. 1*, a naive but ingratiating opus, makes me favor it.

—J.N.

**MOZART:** *Serenade No. 10 in B flat, K. 361*; **Members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Serge**

**Koussevitzky.** Victor set DM- 1303, four discs, price \$6.00, or set WDM-1303, four 7-inch discs, price \$4.50.

**MOZART** enthusiasts will undoubtedly have the Fischer Chamber Ensemble recording of this work, issued by Victor in March 1941 (set 743). Some may have replaced it by the Furtwaengler performance (H.M.V. discs DB6707/11 or DB9226/30). Neither the Fischer version or the new Koussevitzky include either the second minuet or the *Romance*, attractive pieces as the Furtwaengler version reveals. In my estimation, the latter performance is one of the best Furtwaengler has accomplished for the phonograph, one in which his aggravating pace changes are not practised. It should have been issued by Victor.

This is one of Mozart's beautiful and remarkable serenades. If one accepts the theory that it was composed for members of the Munich orchestra at the time that *Idomeneo* was being prepared for performance, then Mozart must have admired these particular wind players.

Save for the scoring for 13 wind instruments, this opus might have been a symphony. Certainly, the opening movement has "a full-bodied symphony structure and the adagio a sober and profoundly expressive interweaving of melodic lines..." The melodic freshness, sonority and spontaneity of this work recommends it to all Mozart enthusiasts. What the composer accomplished with a chamber group is not only surprising but musically most rewarding and entertaining. The scoring is for 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 basset-horns, 2 bassoons, 1 contrabassoon, 2 French horns. From this group, the young composer achieves unusual tonal coloring, evoking many moods. In the *Adagio* and *Romance*, he curiously anticipates the coming romantic trend of the 19th century, though his restraint of feeling reveals his devotion to formal perfection.

Koussevitzky seems never to come to grips with Mozart. He, for example, does not penetrate the heart of the *Adagio* as Furtwaengler. Here, he seems more concerned with perfection of execution than with interpretation. It is all very beautiful and impressive execution but it communicates less than the Furtwaengler version. To be sure, it is a finer performance than the earlier

Fischer one, which, as I noted at the time, seemed insufficiently rehearsed. Too, the recording is much finer. The present performance was made at last year's Berkshire Festival in Tanglewood, Mass. —P.H.R.



**LISZT:** *Fountains at the Villa d'Este* (from *Years of Pilgrimage, Vol. III*); **Jose Iturbi** (piano). Victor disc 12-0921, price \$1.25.

ON RECEIVING this disc for review I recalled some remarks of the late Albert Lockwood on the Villa d'Este music which Liszt wrote, so I hastened to look them up in his book, *Notes on the Literature of the Piano*. Lockwood speaks well of the *Threnodies*, inspired by the ancient cypresses of the Villa d'Este, and how Liszt saw them through tears. "No one," he adds, "should miss their sad glory." It seems strange that no one plays these works nowadays. *Fountains*

at the Villa d'Este remains the most popular piece from the third volume of Liszt's *Years of Pilgrimage*, perhaps because it is one of the most attractive of the composer's picturesque compositions. The atmosphere of sadness found in the *Threnodies* prevails in this music despite its shimmering water effects.

Iturbi stresses more of the descriptive qualities of the music rather than the expressive. His performance is admirable for its clean technique and avoidance of his usual mannered style. The recording is excellent but a surface hiss in the second half proved disturbing. —J.N.

**MOUSSORGSKY** (arr. Whitemore & Lowe): *Coronation Scene* from *Boris Godounoff*; and **SHOSTAKOVICH:** *Polka* from *The Age of Gold*; **Arthur Whitemore and Jack Lowe** (duo-pianists). Victor 7-inch disc 49-0405, price 95c, or disc 12-0923, price \$1.25.

ANYONE familiar with the *Coronation Scene* with its exuberant choral singing and its orchestral effects will hardly be



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drawn to this misguided transcription, in which neither the music nor the performance serves to advantage the composer's intentions. I can hardly think of anyone familiar with the scene finding any genuine pleasure in this recording in which the two pianists perform rather laboriously. The Shostakovich *Polka* is the sort of a brash piece which somehow stands up under any type of treatment. Victor engineers have served Messrs. Whitemore and Lowe very well indeed, but the surfaces on my little 45 were quite as much in evidence as they have been on piano 78s of late. Apparently, vinylite varies, for others we heard this month were much smoother. —P.H.R.

**SARASATE:** *Habanera*, Op. 21, No. 2; and **WIENIAWSKI:** *Scherzo Tarantelle*, Op. 16; **Yehudi Menuhin** (violin) and **Gerald Moore** (piano). Victor 7-inch disc 49-0404, price 95c, or 12-0922, price \$1.25.

I HAVE not heard the 78 but I did hear the original H.M.V. which was a smooth surfaced disc. Victor's 45, while substantiating the first rate recording, has an aggressive surface. This is one of Menuhin's finest records — his playing of the *Habanera* is technically most impressive with its tonal limpidity and rhythmic grace. Maybe Sarasate's gypsy tunes are *ersatz* but his uncanny knowledge of the fiddle made him devise quite a virtuosic piece from them. The Wieniawski is another virtuoso stunt which has one moment of shimmering loveliness from Menuhin's violin which may cause a few amateurs some embarrassing moments to imitate. Other than that, I cannot say it holds my interest though it is well played. The accompaniments of Mr. Moore are perfect foils to the violinist artistry with just the right emphasis on rhythm to give them individual entity. —P.H.R.



**CURTIS:** *Torna a Sorriento*; and **COT-TRAU:** *Santa Lucia*; **Luigi Infantino** (tenor) with Orchestra. Columbia 10-inch disc 3-121, price 90c.

▲You can never tell what Italian tenors

will do with the old and familiar songs, especially those which have become folk melodies. Apparently, Infantino thinks both of these need a little pepping up. Sentiment prevails in *Torna a Sorriento* and an operatic ending is added to *Santa Lucia*. Despite these observations, the singing is good, and both pices are well recorded. —J.N.

#### FOLK SONGS OF THE BRITISH ISLES:

*Phyllis Has Such Charming Graces*, *My Lovely Celia*, *Mary of Allendale* (Old English Melodies, arr. H. Lane Wilson), *Down By the Sally Gardens* (Irish Country Song, arr. Hughes), *Come, Let's Be Merry* (Old English Melody, arr. Wilson), *The Ballynure Ballad* (Irish Country Song, arr. Hughes). *Oliver Cromwell* (arr. Britten); **Robert Merrill** (baritone) with **Leila Edwards** at the piano. Victor set MO-1306, three discs, price \$4.00, or set WMO-1306, three 7-inch discs, price \$3.35.

NOT all of these songs are classified by the English as folk songs but, be that as it may, all are most familiar and much admired old melodies of the British Isles. Mr. Merrill sings them all very agreeably with more personal conviction than was apparent in some of his previous work for the phonograph. I find the recording most satisfying especially from the 78 records. On an ordinary player, the 45s did not impress me as being any better and I was surprised to find some surface sound cutting in on the singer. —J.N.

#### GERMAN SENTIMENTAL SONGS:

*Abendlied*; *Rose im Schnee* (Herm-Lons-Jode); *Drei rote Rosen* (Schultze); *Gasparone-Dunkelrote Rose* (Milloecker); *Tausend Schiffe, tausend Masten wiegt die weite See* (Metzger-Bochmann); *Wie schon bist Du-Bezaubernde Tropennacht* (Lehnow-Bochmann); *Alle strassen der Welt* (Metzger-Bochmann); **Wilhelm Strienz** (bass) with orchestral accompaniment. London set LA81, four 10-inch discs, price \$4.50.

WHEN a noted operatic artist turns to popular songs, he is very apt to be lauded as well as condemned. Strienz, one of the foremost German basses, will be recalled as the very satisfactory Sarastro in Beecham-Mozart Opera Society set of *The*



*Magic Flute*. Whether he makes a practice of this sort of thing or not, I cannot say. The important thing remains he sings so naturally and easily and unaffectedly that one finds his artistry enjoyable. The songs are, all in a sentimental vein, as the album title states. One feels the singer distinguishes them and for this reason translations of the texts would have been welcome. The arrangements are effectively made and the playing of the unnamed orchestra adds to one's enjoyment. While the recording is well made, it does not suggest extended range.

—J.N.

**LEHAR:** *Schon ist die Welt* — *Liebste Glaub'an mich*) *Giuditta* — *Du bist meine Sonne*; *Die Lustige Witwe* — *Sich' dort dein kleinen Pavillon*; *Der Graf Luxemburg* — *Bist du lachendes Glück*; **STRAUSS:** Johann: *Der Zigeunerbaron* — *Wer uns Getraut*; **Helge Roswaenge** (tenor), with **Lisa Della Casa** (soprano) (in the last two selections), **Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra**, conducted by **Victor Reinshagen**. London Records set LA79, three discs, price \$7.00.

**R**EADING the publicity under the cover of this album one is tempted to believe that Roswaenge is a miracle man. Such physical stamina, to say nothing of vocal prowess, as Roswaenge's seven days of singing in opera in present-day Vienna suggests both a wonder man and an individual who lives right. The tenor's picture bears this out and we were rather astonished that claims of an athletic nature were not advanced for him. Curiously the Roswaenge voice is more lyrical than dramatic. On the whole, his appealing production is free and consistently smooth in quality; his diction is excellent. His performance in the recording suggests a marked sense of characterization, which makes the omission of translations of the texts regrettable.

While Roswaenge knows the value of sentiment in expression, he does not indulge in the exaggerated feeling of the late Richard Tauber. There is a manly strength in his singing at all times. Apparently the tenor is at much at home in operetta as in opera. And, as his singing here is of such a high order, one can only hope that London will see fit to bring him back to Zurich to make an album of operatic arias in the near future.

The Zurich Town Hall Orchestra and its able conductor provide throughout smooth orchestral accompaniments. An agreeable, limpid voiced soprano joins the tenor in the duets. The recording is tops. Smooth record surfaces.

—J.N.

**LEHAR:** *Operettas from Vienna* — *The Merry Widow*, *The Count of Luxembourg*, *Pagani* — *Excerpts*; **Anita Gura** (soprano), **Peter Anders** (tenor), **Martina Wulf** (soprano), **Hugo Welfing** (tenor), **Elisabeth Schwartzkopf** (soprano), **Rupert Glawitsch** (tenor) with orchestra, conducted by **H. Schmidt-Isserstadt** and **H. Otto**. Capitol-Telefunken set ECL-2501, three discs, price \$5.00.

**STRAUSS, Johann, Jr.:** *Excerpts from The Bat*, *A Night in Venice* and *The Gypsy Baron*; **Erna Berger**, **Elisabeth Friedrich**, **Anni Frind** (sopranos), **Charlotte Mueller** (alto), **Peter Anders** (tenor),

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▲The consistently high order of the singing and the fine recording recommend these albums to all who admire the tuneful music of the Viennese operettas. There are a lot of famous names here and others less well known. All acquit themselves with honors, and the orchestral direction is of the best. Most European recordings, being released these days, are especially praiseworthy from the instrumental side, as apparently a much fuller orchestra is employed. The only thing missing are translations of the texts to make for complete enjoyment for those who do not speak or understand German.

—J.N.

#### THE ROYAL WELSH MALE CHOIR:

*The March of the Men of Harlech; Aberystwyth; Land of my Fathers; The Pure Heart (Llef (Deus Salutis); Small Saucepan.* Sung in Welsh. Choir directed by **Gwilym T. Jones**. London Records set LA76, three 10-inch discs, price \$5.50.

THIS is unison male chorus singing of a surprisingly high order. I suspect a Welshman might disagree with our choice of an adjective, for the Welsh are known as a singing race and it is very possible, in view of what the annotator of the set tells us, that many such choirs exist in Wales. As the album was undoubtedly devised with the Welsh in mind, *Land of Our Fathers*, the National Anthem of Wales, and *The Men of Harlech*, a traditional march air once claimed as the National Anthem, undoubtedly had to be included. But the most appealing selections are the hymns, which are sung with fine feeling. *Llef (Deus Salutis)* is a lovely thing of its kind, and *Aberystwyth, or Jesu, Lover of my Soul* is a musicianly and appealing setting of the text. The recording suggests a studio.

—J.N.

**SITWELL-WALTON:** *Facade*; **Edith Sitwell**, reader, with Chamber Orchestra conducted by **Frederick Prausnitz**. Columbia set MM-829, four discs, price, \$5.00.

THE fascinating and engaging combination of poems by Edith Sitwell and music by William Walton, *Facade*, was given its American premiere at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City last January. Over 25 years had elapsed since the work had had its first performance in Aeolian Hall in London.

The musical portion of the work has gained a great deal of popularity in America since its introduction here by Sir Thomas Beecham in 1936, but those who now enjoy the delightful orchestral suite will undoubtedly perceive how much more remarkable the music becomes when heard, as it was intended to be heard, with the words.

In the matter of moods and rhythms, the music fits the Sitwell poems like a glove. Though Walton was but nineteen when he wrote it, *Facade* shows a genius's mind at work in its fanciful scoring, its melodic invention, its multi-tinted instrumental hues, and its variety of expressivity. The major portion of the work is high-spirited, but there are some sections that display delicate nostalgia and charming wistfulness.

It appears that many persons have misunderstood the poems used in *Facade* by taking the work for a satire. Admitting the witty parody in much of the music, the poems are, nevertheless (according to the author), abstract patterns which tell no story, point no moral.

At the New York premiere, the work was performed in a room on the museum's fourth floor, words and music being transmitted to the auditorium downstairs by microphone. The only things seen by the audience were two designs, featuring masks by the Spanish painter, Esteban Frances, which were projected on a screen covering the stage. This procedure was in keeping with Dr. Sitwell's wishes to eliminate the element of personality, especially in the case of the speaker whose "personality obtrudes and engages the audience."

It would seem, therefore, that for once the phonograph provides the ideal medium for presenting a work of art. The performance on these records is assuredly a complete delight. The direction of Frederick Prausnitz and the playing of the instrumentalists (from the Juilliard School) is splendid, and Dr. Sitwell's recitations are superb. As a matter of fact, her readings are so full of

magic as to make one wonder whether *Facade* would ever be as effective without her.

It is a privilege to commend the engineers, who were responsible for faithfully capturing the sound of this authentic performance, and Columbia, who has given us in these records surfaces as smooth as glass. An unusually attractive booklet containing the complete text and delightful illustrations by James Flora accompanies the album.

—C.J.L.

**VERDI:** *Don Carlos* — Introduction and Dramatic Aria: *Ella giammai m'amo; D'ormiro sol nel manto mio regal.* **Ezio Pinza**, basso, with **Metropolitan Opera Orchestra** conducted by **Fausto Cleva**. Columbia disc 72802-D, price \$1.00.

IT IS no news that Ezio Pinza is one of the few musicians who sings as if he believes that good opera is good theatre, that handsome sounds are just tools to be used for appropriately expressive purposes. But old story or no, I believe that sensitive listeners will be absorbed by this latest example of Pinza's extraordinary dramatic art. His kind of expressive singing is available all too rarely for us to pass by any manifestation of it.

This is the second time that he has recorded this beautiful aria, but the first time he has given us the touching recitative. And how he sings the opening phrases of that recitative. He gives one a complete realization of King Philip's despair over the loss of a love that he never really had.

Pinza's Victor record (6709—out of print) of this aria has remained through the years one of his best performances. This new record, while just as dramatically cogent, is not as sonorously sung at the climatic points. But if time has made Pinza use more effort in singing high and loud, it has not diminished his powers of pianissimo singing, which have never been more persuasive than on this record.

The orchestral accompaniment by Fausto Cleva is, however, completely uninspired. Cleva's rhythm is slack, his phrasing has no life; and at a couple of points the singer and orchestra are not together. The recording is mostly clear, but there are a few patches of woolly sound and the singer is, as usual, far too close to the microphone for natural balance. The surfaces are adequate.—C.J.L.

**MARCEL WITTRISCH:** *Paganini—Niemand liebt Dich so wie Ich; Die Lustige Witwe—Lippen schweigen; Der Zarewitsch—Wolgaliéd; Frasnquita—Hab' ein blaues Himmelbett* (Lehar); *Zirkusprinzessin—Zwei Marchenangen* (Kalman); *Der Vetter aus Dingsda—Ich bin nur ein armer Wander-geselle* (Kunnecke); **Marcel Wittrisch** (tenor) with **Julia Moor** in first two selections, **Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra**, conducted by **Victor Reinshagen**. London Records set LA78, three discs, price \$7.00.

IT IS not surprising to find that since the war the Viennese are reviving interest in their operettas. The sentiment and charm of much of these scores reflects an older and much happier existence. The recent death of Lehar undoubtedly reawakens interest in his many popular works — all so full of appealing and ingratiating melodies. It only takes singers with appealing voices to make these tunes relive in a manner to please their public.

Perhaps London should have avoided the issue of Roswaenge's album at the same time as this one. For Wittrisch, while possessing an agreeable tenor voice, does not evidence the same healthy artistry. He fondles a phrase too often and indulges in too much *Schmalts* as well as rubati. Some of his pianissimo singing is appealing, but his falsetto tones recall too vividly the popular

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crooner. His companion, Julia Moor has lovely high notes but a distracting vibrato in her lower voice. Together, they sentimentalize too much the familiar waltz duet from *The Merry Widow* for my liking. Taste in such matters varies and there are probably as many people who like their operetta selections sung in this way as do not. But after listening to Roswaenge I find Witt-risch's artistry less persuasive. Reinshagen capably handles the orchestra, making retards whenever the singers demand them which under the circumstances could not have been an easy task. Reproduction is on a par with London's best.

—J.N.

**YOU ARE THERE:** *The Signing of the Magna Charta (June 19, 1215)*; as reported by C.B.S. correspondents in the Columbia Broadcasting System's radio programs; with John Daly, Ken Roberts, Don Hollenbeck and Quincey Howe. Produced and directed by Robert Lewis Shay-on.

This is an attempt on C.B.S.'s part to show what they would have done if there had been radio during the time that the Magna Charter was signed. This procedure is supposed to bring that event to life more convincingly than print.

The pitfalls of such a venture as this are well known, and I don't think C.B.S. misses many of them. Except for parents or educators who accept audio aids as a substitution for reading for children, I cannot imagine who would want to buy this set for repeated hearings.

—C.J.L.

## New Long - Playing Discs

THERE is a consistent improvement of quality in Columbia's new long playing discs. With a flat overall response in a pickup, l.p.s should cause no troubles in reproduction and the general effect will be one of smoother and more realistic performance.

There are however, varying reports on these records by different writers; some complain of muddy bass while others protest against "peaking" in the high registers. That the record buyer can profit best by making his own comparisons remains a fore-

gone conclusion. (Mr. Lanier, in an early issue, will have something of importance to say on the reproduction of modern records, including l.p.s.)

While modern pickups offer a great advancement over those employed before the war in overall tonal quality, they also present some problems which have not been ironed out. Some of the extended range pickups have peaks in their upper range, notably — we are told — around the 9,000 level. Mass production in modern pickups has proved that the point of peaking varies, so that an original alignment made with the purchase of the first cartridge by a reputable service man might be completely nullified with the purchase of a second cartridge. The problem of bass rumble may have to do with a cheap motor, but it may be due to other causes and these we will let Mr. Lanier take up.

### Replacing Cartridges

One member of our staff, Anson W. Peckham, in replacing his G.E. cartridge recently had to purchase six different ones before he matched the characteristics of the original one for which corrective compensations had been made. When you read that some reviewer has found shrillness in violins or other instruments in various l.p.s. or blurring in the lower ranges it might be well to test the record in question on your own machine, for there is a wide margin of disagreement.

In the past, we learned that the majority of recordings issued were good and that troubles with reproduction were caused by differences in equipment assembly. Those who did not have the correct controls on their outfits to permit reduction or addition of bass encountered many problems as the cross-over between constant frequency and constant amplitude varied between domestic and foreign recordings.

Those using a bass reflex cabinet for the speakers had troubles, the nature of which were outlined by Mr. Lanier in his recent article, *How To Mount a Loudspeaker* (see March 1949 issue). All varying characteristics of recording are related to acoustic set-ups and not to differences in the technique of recording. This has not been realized by many who continually advance preposterous claims that alterations in recording technique have created this or that problem and/or difference in tonal quality.

One of the remarkable advancements of the long playing disc, over its 78 counterpart, has been an added acoustic resonance which has more often than not served to clarify previously diffused lines and thereby produce an overall smoothness of quality (any recommended correction for shrillness on the high end may be due to the equipment used by the advisor). A striking example of this is afforded by the l.p. version of the Serkin-Reiner performance of the Brahms *Piano Concerto in D minor* (Columbia Microgroove ML4100). The 78 version suffered, as most of the Pittsburgh Symphony recordings did from the lack of acoustic resonance. This latter version proved diffuse and thick in tonal texture and incited some unfavorable comments in the press.

### An English Criticism

The latest comment made by Sackville West in *The New Statesman and Nation*, brought forth the curt statement, "a villainously bad set. The performance — both solo and orchestral — one guesses to have been splendid; but the recording is flimsy and acid to a degree, with hardly a moment of true tone and no depth whatever". Were S. W. to hear the l.p. version of this work, correctly reproduced, he would indeed find the performance splendid. Inasmuch as English machines are not made to compensate for the higher level of cross-over in the bass, he found difficulties with lack of depth, a quite different condition than many domestic reviewers found.

Another striking example of the betterment of the l.p. over the original 78 is found in the Reiner performance of Mozart's *G minor Symphony*. The finer quality of the l.p. performance of the Metropolitan *Bohème* has already been cited in this magazine.

There can be no question that the long playing record has come to stay and that it is adding a new joy to recorded music. After listening to an l.p. version of a symphony, concerto or string quartet, turning to a 78 recording, no matter how superior the reproduction, one may become restless and nervous in the absorption of a long work which is broken up. A climactic development by the conductor can be badly disturbed by the breaks as we found last month in the Toscanini performance of the *Pathétique*. In matters of shorter works, which take only one side of a disc, the 78 which

offers superior reproduction, as in the case of so many of the fine issues of London Records and others, is of course preferable.

### Popularity of L. P's.

Doubts no longer exist regarding the public's reception of l.p.s. Monthly, dealers write us of the high regard that today's record buyers have for these discs. More and more companies are issuing l.p.s, the latest of these being the Concert Hall Society, domestic Cetra, Mercury Records, and Vox.

Cetra has issued its performance of Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* (abridged) on two l.p. records. The work of dubbing was accomplished by Columbia engineers, who have succeeded in adding an overall enlivening resonance to the original, which serves both the singing and the orchestral playing to advantage. Some cuts were necessary in the l.p. version but these are not serious nor disrupting to the balance of the score. Other l.p. sets will be issued shortly by Cetra — the famous Mozart *Requiem* performance, the Molinari arrangement of Vivaldi's *The Seasons*, the Sved Pagliughi arias and duets from *Rigoletto*, and the Italian version of *The Seasons* of Haydn.

Concert Hall Society has a list of 14 l.p.s now available. The transference from 78 to 33 was the work of another concern, not Columbia. The results, which we have heard

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o date, are good. These l.p.s are pressed on the familiar ruby red vinylite used by Concert Hall and the quality of the discs remains first-rate, with little of the disturbing static evident in so many vinylite records these days. Parenthetically, we might remark that the ticks in vinylite are less unpleasant than the gritty surface of so many 78s of late.

The Concert Hall l.p. version of *The Four Seasons* of Vivaldi is a marked improvement over the original. Kaufman's violin is less aggressive and an overall smoothness of balance is pleasantly effected (disc No. 1). The performance of Brahms' *Quintet for Clarinet and Strings*, played by Alfred Gallodoro and the Stuyvesant String Quartet (originally issued by International Records) affirms our original impression that this remains one of the finest acoustic setups for a work of this kind to be found on records. The performance is of a high musical order and commands our respect (disc 4). The Guilet String Quartet rendition of Bartok's *Quartet No. 4* cannot but prove a boon to chamber music enthusiasts, for the highly creative imagination of Bartok asks for uninterrupted playing even though the going may be rough on occasion (disc 9). The music of Schubert profits by continuous flow in his *Quartet, Op. 125, No. 1*, which the Guilet String Quartet plays on disc 7. It is apparent on a superficial hearing in a dealer's booth that the Concert Hall l.p. versions of Khachaturian's *Violin Concerto* (disc 2) and Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 2* (disc 3) would have profited by added acoustic resonance from Columbia engineers. Both works were made by the Santa Monica Symphony Orchestra with Kaufman and Cherkassky as soloists. Neither artist is well served by the dead studio type of recording, though in the case of Cherkassky the piano part of Tchaikovsky seems a shade better on the l.p.

### Mercury L. P.s

Mercury with its long-playing version of Khachaturian's *Violin Concerto* (disc MG-10000, price \$4.85) fares better because the recording has better acoustic qualities. This is a fine example of the l.p. technique in which the splendid artistry of David Oistrach shines like an unfaltering beacon. Less successful, in my estimation, are Mercury's handling of the Telefunken performances of Strauss' *Don Juan* and Tchaikovsky's 1812

Overture, played by Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra (disc MG15000). The seams in the l.p. versions have not been as smoothly achieved and there is some distortion of tone which may have been present in the original recording. However, Mercury boasts 37 minutes of music on this 10-inch disc for \$3.85. Mercury's disc MG10001 (\$4.85) offers an uninterrupted recital from Erna Sack: selections from Lehar, Johann Strauss, Jr., and popular favorites. The lady with the freak voice may be preferable to some in small doses, but if you go for her canary tricks in a big way, you'll want this disc. It's well recorded.

Last but by no means of lesser importance, we come to Columbia's latest l.p.s and find we have a rich harvest of releases. The delay of many of these has prevented comments earlier. Heading the April issue is the fine Szigeti-Horszowski rendition of Beethoven's *Sonata in D major, Op. 12, No. 1*, coupled with an older recording of the Szigeti-Foldes performance of the Schubert *Sonatina in D major, Op. 137, No. 1* (ML 4133). The Morton Gould *After Dark* set (ML 4134) offers too large a dose of music which we believe is better heard piecemeal. However, the indirect listener who likes music as a background to conversation will probably want this record. The Malczynski-Kletski performance of Chopin's *Piano Concerto No. 2* (ML 4135) will permit those who like the music to bask in its sentiment without any disturbance of automatic changers. Both it and the Microgroove version of the Ballet Music from *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Faust* (ML 4136) show what fine recording qualities English engineers can achieve.

Shostakovich's *Ninth Symphony* (Kurtz and the Philharmonic Orch.) comes off well on ML 4137, though we find no greater incentive to hear this music from l.p.s' uninterrupted flow than from 78's hyphenated rendition. There is marked improvement in the quality of sound in the l.p. version of the Reiner-Pittsburgh Symphony performance of the Strauss tone poem, *Heldenleben* (ML 4138), but neither the recording nor the performance enlist our sympathies for this music like the Beecham version on H.M.V. Those who admired the Weill score for *Street Scene* can now have it with one instead of five breaks on ML 4139.

We would rather make selections from the



Robeson-Brown album, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* (ML 2038), which is less easy on an l.p. than via 78 records.

### More Columbia L.P.s

Szell's sober but musically account of Schumann's *Symphony No. 4* is best served by ML 2040. And the artistry of Martial Singher is thoroughly enjoyable in two recitals, *Songs of Debussy and Ravel* and *French Operatic Airs*, from ML 4152, where long interruptions between selections are agreeably cut down.

Not all of the May issues of l.p.s have reached us. The widely-publicized Sitwell-Walton *Facade* (ML 2047) shares honors with the l.p. version of selections from the Rogers-Hammerstein *South Pacific* (ML 4180). Both pack a wallop, but of a far different kind. *Facade* is one of those "arty" hybrids which can cause heated arguments between friends and music lovers. You like dry martinis, I like Bee's Knees, or *vice versa*. Don't let it get you down. But even if you like *Facade*, you'll have to admit it remains a product of the "Twaddling Twenties." As for *South Pacific*, it's a must for those who want a "listen-in" on the Broadway production, which is sold out for months to come. It brings us the whole cast in all the important numbers — Mary Martin, Ezio Pinza (once of the Metropolitan), Juanita Hall, the swell Men's Chorus, etc. Everyone is well served by the l.p. version except Pinza, whose voice seems a bit inflated or over-resonant.

A Philadelphia Orchestra Program (ML 2043) groups Ormandy's performances of the overtures from Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmilla* and Weber's *Der Freischutz*, an arrangement of Weber's *Invitation to the Dance* which remains a little hard for us to take, and a brilliant performance of the *Schwanda Polka and Fugue*. Jennie Tourel is heard in two song recitals on ML 4158 — Debussy-Baudelaire songs and songs by a group of French composers from Bizet to Satie. Disc ML 4146 brings us the fine Maluczynski-Suesskind performance of Liszt's *Piano Concerto No. 2* (well served by l.p.) and the Cyril Smith-Sargent version of Dohnanyi's *Variations on a Nursery Theme*. A disc not to be passed up. The Lambert—Royal Opera House Orchestra *Coppelia* — *Ballet Music* is well-served for those who want their Delibes without interruptions (ML 4145).

Maybe others have been more fortunate than we, but one of Columbia's advertised best l.p.s, containing the Welitsch-Reiner *Salome* — *Final Scene* and the Welitsch-Suesskind *Tatiana's Letter Scene* from *Eugen Onegin*, has not materialized as yet.

Finally, if you have not heard the l.p. version of Menotti's *The Telephone* and *The Medium*, we recommend that you do so (SL set 54—two l.p. discs). —P.H.R.

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## In The Popular Vein

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### Enzo Archetti

**An Invitation To Dance;** Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra. Victor Album P-243, 3-10" discs.

**Noel Coward;** Georges Tzipine and His Concert Orchestra. Capitol Album CC-146, 3-10" discs.

● For two reasons the Noel Coward is the finer album — the better quality of the music and of the arrangements. All are show tunes which have become classics of their kind: *I'll Follow My Secret Heart*, *Zigeuner*, *Someday I'll Find You*, etc. What makes this album exceptional are the arrangements, which are in the Kostelanetz or Gould vein, but not as garish. Singing strings and mellow woodwinds, and an occasional deft touch with harp and flute, make for very pleasant listening.

The Thornhill is along similar lines with some Rodgers and Hart show tunes, treated in the familiar and popular Thornhill manner, with the piano as the center of interest. There are also several so-called concert jazz pieces like *Autumn Nocturne*, *Sleepy Serenade*, and *Lullaby of the Rain*. While the level of inspiration is not as consistently high as in the Coward album, this one, too, makes pleasant listening. Excellent recording.

**Riders in the Sky; Wayfaring Stranger; Woolie Boogie Bee;** Burl Ives. Columbia 38445. **Riders in the Sky and Please Love Me Tonight;** Peggy Lee, with Dave Barbour and His Orchestra. Capitol 57-608.

● Stan Jones' *Riders In The Sky* has gained extraordinary popularity lately. Sub-titled *A Cowboy Legend*, it is actually a sermon in song, set in the familiar Western style. It has all the characteristics of a good folk song and, as Burl Ives does it, it may gain that status. The Peggy Lee version is more elaborate because of the support by the Jud Conlon Singers and the orchestra but it is not as effective as the more simple, direct Burl Ives version.

The other two Ives pieces are now accepted

folk songs which he has popularized. They are excellently done. The Lee flipover is in the common popular song vein, with good rhythmic support by the orchestra.

**A Gay Ranchero and Maybe It's Because;** Andy and Della Russell, with Buddy Cole and His Orchestra. Capitol 57-559. **Yuk-A-Puk and I'm Beginning To Miss You;** Andy Russell and The King Sisters, with Buddy Cole and His Orchestra. Capitol 15388.

●The duets are sung with verve and the proper romantic feeling. The voices blend well. *Yuk-A-Puk* is Morey Amsterdam's zany creation subtitled *A Hill Billy Calypso*. Andy does it as well as Morey, and he is very ably supported. The reverse is in Andy's usual romantic manner.

**Down By the Station and Sixty-Two Ladies In Sea Green Pajamas;** Capitol 15389. **Room Full of Roses and Weddin' Day;** Capitol 57-617. **More Beer! and I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm;** Capitol 15330. **Cherokee and In One Ear and Out the Other;** Capitol 15227. The Starlighters, with Paul Weston and His Orch.

●This group of singers has developed an infectious style which is particularly appealing in broadly funny things like *Sixty-Two Ladies* and slightly rowdy-ish numbers like *More Beer!* But they also have a good sense of rhythm in things like *Down By the Station* and Ray Noble's *Cherokee*. They are less interesting in more romantic numbers.

**Caravan and Pennies From Heaven;** The Alice Hall Trio. Capitol 57-60007. **Godchild and Father Knickerbopper;** Chubby Jackson and His Orchestra. Columbia 38451. **Godchild and Jeru;** Capitol 57-60005. **Move and Budo;** Capitol 15404. Miles Davis and His Orchestra. **Capitolizing and Professor Bop;** Three Bips and A Bop, featuring Babs Gonzales. Capitol 57-60000. **Hawaiian War Chant and Always;** Dave Lambert, with Vocal Group and Rhythm. Capitol 57-60001. **Sid's Delight and Casbah;** Tadd Dameron and His Orchestra. Capitol 57-60006. **Little Boy Bop Go Blow Your Top and Ensenada;** Dave Barbour and His Orchestra. Capitol 57-60002. **Crosscurrent and Wow;** The Lennie Tristano Sextette. Capitol 57-60003.

●You can't escape it! Every monthly list is overloaded with bebop. If you must have samples of this formless, cacophonous improvising masquerading under the name of jazz, these are as good examples as you're likely to get anywhere because nearly all these groups have built up a reputation around their handling of bop. Least painful are Jackson's *Godchild* and Lambert's *Hawaiian War Chant*. Dave Barbour's *Ensenada* is definitely out of order in this company because it is a beautifully played Latin-American dance number.

**Don't Get Around Much Anymore and Singin' In the Rain;** Duke Ellington and His Orchestra. Columbia 38464.

●After that storm of sound, it is like a breath of fresh air to hear some honest jazz again, especially when played so well, as it is here.

**The Moon Is Low and How High the Moon;** Bill Harris, trombone, with Orchestra conducted by Sonny Burke. Capitol 57-60004.

●These are trombone solos, with orchestra. I still find it hard to accept Bill Harris as a first rate player: his tone seems so uncertain and insecure. Actually, the backgrounds are more interesting. Recording is very life-like.

**The Little Old Church Near Leicester Square and 1400 Dream Street;** Freddy Martin and His Orchestra. Vocals by Mary Griffin and The Martin Men. Victor 20-3384. **The Little Old Church Near Leicester Square and A Chapter In My Life Called Mary;** Gordon MacRae, with Paul Weston and His Orchestra. Capitol 15425.

●Sentimental and romantic. The Gordon MacRae is better sung. The accompaniments are about of equal interest. The weight is in favor of the MacRae because of the flipover which is a cute song with a novel title.

**My One and Only Highland Fling and Havin' A Wonderful Wish;** Freddy Martin and His Orchestra. Vocals by Mary Griffin and The Martin Men. Victor 20-3432.

●The Scottish number is a clever novelty from the picture *The Barkleys of Broadway*. Without having seen the picture, it sounds like a highly entertaining number. The reverse, from Bob Hope's forthcoming picture *Sorrowful Jones*, has already caught the public fancy and it is creating good advance publicity for the picture.

**The Huckle Buck and It Happens Every Spring;** Columbia 38486. **Night After Night and The Right Girl For Me.** Columbia 38456. Frank Sinatra, with Orchestra under the direction of Axel Stordahl.

●Three of these display various facets of Sinatra's highly rarified romantic mooning. *The Huckle Buck*, instead, is pure rhythm for rhythm's sake. The Ken Lane Quintet assisted here. Excellently done. Axel Stordahl's accompaniment sounds better than usual. There are some fine sax passages behind *Night After Night* and some good piano and clarinet behind *It Happens Every Spring*.

**Alt Wien and Look For the Silver Lining;** The Three Suns. Victor 20-3433.

●Leopold Godowsky's *All Wien* has gone through many transformations but this is probably the first time it has been played by

such an instrumental combination as the Three Suns and with so much schmaltz. The reverse is more in their usual vein, with The Fontaine Sisters helping out.

**Me and My Shadow and I Found A Million Dollar Baby;** Capitol 57-593. **Big Bear Lake and I'm Just Wild About Animal Crackers;** Capitol 57-560. The Sportsmen, with Billy May's Orchestra.

●The Sportsmen can always be depended upon for some novel vocal arrangements. The first two have been resurrected from way back, dressed up with some patter and novel effects, and the result is entertaining. The second disc is more broadly comic, with Mel Blanc (the voice of Woody Woodpecker in the cartoons) supplying the funny sounds and words.

**Just An Idea (Rhumba) and Masquerade (Rhumba);** Rene Touzet and His Orchestra. Capitol 15360. **La Raspa and The Hot Canary;** Paul Weston and His Orchestra. Capitol 15373. **Brazilian Rhapsody (Samba) and Rhumba Cocktail;** José Morand and His Orchestra. Victor 20-3342. **Rumbalero** — 2 parts; Jerry Wald and His Orchestra. Columbia 38455. **Muchachita (Rhumba) and Los Timbales (Rhumba);** Xavier Cugat and His Orchestra. Vocals by Del Campo and Bob Graham. Columbia 38477. **Cavaquinho (Samba) and Danca Do Quebra-Quebra;** Chuy Reyes and His Orchestra. Capitol 57-579. **Rhumba Rhapsody and Hasta Manana;** Carlos Molina and His Music of the Americas. Columbia 37-595.

●Devotees of the Latin American dance will find plenty to satisfy them here, both musically and physically. It is difficult to pick any favorites because they are so good. If one must choose, then let it be *Rhumba Rhapsody*, *Cavaquinho*, *Brazilian Rhapsody*, and *La Raspa* (a Mexican dance). *Rumbalero* is a Toots Camarata composition and it is on a little more ambitious scale than the rest, being a rhapsody on rhumba and bolero rhythms. *La Raspa* sounds like a theme Aaron Copeland used in his *El Salon Mexico*, thoroughly mixed with others of various origin, including American nursery tunes. The stranger in the lot is *The Hot Canary*, a Paul Nero novelty composition, played by Paul Nero as a violin solo backed by some hot rhythm by Paul Weston. The recording throughout the batch is excellent.

**South Pacific** — Complete Score. Ezio Pinza, Mary Martin, Barbara Luna, Juanita Hall, William Tabbert, Chorus, and Orchestra conducted by Salvatore Dell'Isola. Columbia Album MM-850, 7-10" discs.

●Now that we have heard all the many individual versions of high spots from this popular show, we have the complete musical score, with the original cast, for consideration and at

first hearing all the other versions are immediately eclipsed.

Two things impress one at once: how little Pinza sings and the splendid orchestrations of Robert Russell Bennett. But to that little Pinza does sing, he does with fine artistry and vocal richness.

Mary Martin and an energetic chorus point up two other qualities of the score: its verve and its melody. But when the last record has spun its magic, the thought persists that this is not especially distinguished music and that were it not for the performers, the show would be short-lived. Columbia has recorded the work with care and skill.

**Early American Folk Songs;** Bob Atcher, with guitar accompaniment. Columbia Album H-6, 4-10" discs. **A Long Road Ahead and I Traded My Heart For A Tear;** Bob Atcher, with String Band. Columbia 37326. **On Account of You and Wasted Tears;** Bob Atcher, with Randy Atcher and His Swingin' Cowboys. Columbia 37878.

●The honesty and simplicity of these early folk tunes are whole-heartedly engaging, especially when so well sung by this young Kentuckian, who, until now, has apparently been wasting his time on contrived stuff like that on the other two discs in this group. Here is a folk singer who should be reckoned along with Burl Ives, Josh White, Leadbelly, Sonny Terry, and others.

Two ballads — *Barbara Allen* and *Young Rogers the Miller* — and five songs — *De Ladies' Man*, *Methodist Pie*, *Devilish Mary*, *Old Smokey* and *The Hunters of Kentucky* — are included. They are recommended without reservation.

**Tributes in Tempo; The Modernaires, with orchestras directed by Mitchell Ayres, Dick Jones, and Lou Bring.** Columbia Album C-181, 4-10" discs. **Johnny Get Your Girl and Busy Doing Nothing (from a Connecticut Yankee);** The Modernaires, with orchestras directed by Jerry Gray and Lou Bring. Columbia 38416. **Dummy Song and La Cucaracha;** The Modernaires, with orchestra directed by Mannie Klein. Columbia 38305.

The album is a good idea: a musical tribute to eight outstanding jazz and popular-dance musicians. The chosen numbers are those most closely associated with the musicians but the arrangements and presentations are strictly in the now well-known Modernaires' manner, not slavish imitations of the styles of the musicians to whom the tributes are paid.

There is *Salute To Glenn Miller*, an original based on themes from four of the late orchestra leader's most famous numbers. The pace of the rhythmic numbers and the romantic atmosphere of the others are expertly captured. The staccato orchestrations of Hal Kemp are suggested in *Lamplight* and Jack Jenny's vibrant trombone, in *Stardust*. The highly styl-

ized balladeering of Ben Bernie and Russ Co. lombo are recalled in *It's A Lonesome Old Town* and *You Call It Madness*. The rocking arrangements of Chick Webb and Jimmie Lunceford are suggested in *Rock It For Me* and *Margie*, and even the ebullient personality of Fats Waller in *Ain't Misbehavin'*. A nostalgic tribute, well presented. The singles are further examples of this group's expert arranging.

**Blue Rumba and You're So Understanding;** Larry Green and His Orchestra. Vocals by Ray Dorey. Victor 20-3405. **Valencia — Pasodoble and Hot Canary Polka;** Merrie Musette Orchestra. Victor 20-3398. **Upside Down Polka and Outdoor Waltz;** Six Fat Dutchmen, under direction of H. Loeffelmacher. Victor 20-3387.

A steady beat, good but not sensational orchestration, and excellent performances. In short, a good danceable set of discs — if you have the energy to keep up with them because this is vigorous dance music.

**Ballin the Jack and Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! The Three Suns.** Victor 20-3399.

While this version of the jazz classic, *Ballin' the Jack*, will not supplant other memorable versions, it is splendidly done in the best Three Suns manner. The reverse is an energetic polka, also well done instrumentally, and supported vocally by the Fontane Sisters.

**Whispering Waters and A Chapter In My Life Called Mary;** Buddy Clark, with orchestra directed by Ted Dale. Columbia 38443.

The ballad *Whispering Waters* is poetic and the reverse is a typically modern, frank love song. Buddy does both well. The surfaces on this disc are not as quiet as they should be.

**When Is Sometimes;** Margaret Whiting, with Frank De Vol and His Orchestra. Capitol 15426. **If You Stub Your Toe On the Moon;** The King Cole Trio. Capitol 15418. **If You Stub Your Toe On the Moon and Once and For Always;** Tony Martin, with Earle Hagen and His Orchestra. Victor 20-3382. **Busy Doing Nothing;** Vaughn Monroe and His Orchestra. Vocal by Vaughn Monroe and The Moon Maids. Victor 20-3382. **When Is Something?** Perry Como, with Russ Case and His Orchestra. Victor 20-3382. **Busy Doing Nothing;** Jack Smith, The Clark Sisters, and Earl Sheldon and His Orchestra. Capitol 15429. **Once and For Always;** Jo Stafford, with Paul Weston and His Orch. Capitol 15424. 15424.

Without having seen the picture, and purely on the evidence of these discs, *A Connecticut*

*Yankee in King Arthur's Court* must be a romp for Bing Crosby because the music is made to order for him. There are the romantic numbers like *Once and For Always* and *When Is Sometime?*; a rhythmic piece like *If You Stub Your Toe*; and an impish one like *Busy Doing Nothing* — all of which fit him well. Best in this bunch is the Como. Next is Jack Smith's *Busy Doing Nothing*. Runners-up are Whiting's and Stafford's. The Tony Martin somehow doesn't click and the King Cole and Vaughn Monroe are hardly worth mentioning. Technically, all are first rate.

The non-"Yankee" flipovers are Jack Smith's *Senora*, a comic number with Latin Spanish accent and rhythms; "A" *You're Adorable*, a cute alphabet song; *Is It Too Late?* a Vaughn Monroe in the more familiar manner, better fare than its reverse for juke-boxes; *Don't Cry, Cry Baby*, a King Cole about which the same thing can be said; and *The Story of My Life* by Margaret Whiting, a love song, neat but not particularly distinguished.

**It's A Big Wide Wonderful World; and While We're Young;** The Unitones directed by George Mitchell. London L.413.

The Unitones is a well-trained choral group which sings in unison. Both numbers have a big hearty swing in the *Cruising Down the River* manner. Very effective and excellently recorded.

**Don't Take My Word; and The Kissing Tree;** Johnston and Dean, accompanied by The One Nighters. London 420.

Evidently the American Western song is popular in England, too, for *Don't Take My Word* is one of them. Not quite the right twang but good, anyway, by these popular duetists.

## RECENT IMPORTATIONS

(Continued from page 298)

As a parenthetical note for cello enthusiasts, there are three worthwhile releases of recent vintage that will repay attention. First among these is **Pierre Fournier's** brilliant discourse of Saint-Saens' concerto (HMV DB6602/3), notable more for the playing than the worth of the score. Ibert's *Concerto for Cello and Wind Instruments* **Gaston Marchesini**, wind ensemble, **Oubradous**; French HMV DB11140/1) hardly plumbs any great depths either; at least it is short, witty, and well made. More sinewy stuff is the *Andante* from Honegger's *Cello Concerto* **Maurice Marechal**, **Paris Conservatory Orch.**, Honegger; French Col. LFX676/7). —A.W.P.

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